DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 179 304 PS 011 043

AUTHOR	Espinoza, Renato; Newman, Yvonne
TITLE	Stepparenting.
INSTITUTION	Southwest Educational Development Lab., Austin, Tex.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Mental Health (DHEW), Rockville, Md. Center for Studies of Child and Family Mental Health.
REPORT NO	DHEW-ADM-78-579
PUB DATE	79
CONTRACT	PLD-6678-76PB
NOTE	66p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (Stock Number 017-024-00853-2, $2.20)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Annotated Bibliographies; Emotional Adjustment; Emotional Response; *Family Problems; *Family Relationship; *Family Structure; Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Role; *Role Perception; Role Theory
IDENTIFIERS	*Stepparents

ABSTRACT

This paper describes and organizes empirical information about stepfamilies. The emphasis is on (1) the nature of stepparent roles, (2) how individuals adjust to the demands imposed by the roles, and (3) how the special steprelationships affect the overall functioning of the family. Special problems of stepfamilies are examined and advice offered from popular literature is reviewed. Research needs are identified and considerations for helping professions are noted. An annotated bibliography is included. (Author/JMB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED179304

STEPPARENTING

With Annotated Bibliography

By Renato Espinoza and Yvonne Newman

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Public Health Service
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration

Center for Studies of Child and Family Mental Health
National Institute of Mental Health
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

PS011043

This paper was prepared under Contract No. PLD-6678-76PB awarded to the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory by the Division of Special Mental Health Programs of the National Institute of Mental Health.

DHEW Publication No. (ADM) 78-579
Printed 1979

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Stock Number 017-024-00853-2

Foreword

The present report on stepparenting has been designed to provide a review of recent research and of the popular literature concerning childrearing in reconstituted families. The stepfamily has become a social phenomenon in its own right with an incidence estimated to be between 10 and 15 percent of all households in the United States. Stepfamilies experience some unique problems because of their special nature, and problems common to all families may in some instances become more pronounced. The extent of the confusion in this area and the need for careful, scientific research and follow-up studies are demonstrated by a recent National Institute of Mental Health funded investigation which found that stepchildren viewed their mental health to be as good as that of other children. In the same study, stepchildren were found to be as successful and achieving as other children.

This report reflects the center's goal of disseminating information and encouraging the utilization of knowledge gained from research, demonstration and action programs by service providers and parents to help improve the mental health of families in communities.

Joy G. Schulterbrandt
Chief
Center for Studies of Child and Family
Mental Health

Abstract

A review of the empirical literature dealing with stepparenting in the last decade has revealed that the small number of studies conducted have been based on a total sample of no more than 550 stepfamilies. The empirical literature has identified the sources of difficulties in stepfamilies that arise from a lack of societal definition of the role of stepparent and the interference from the former spouse, whether dead or alive. There are more stepfather than stepmother families, and stepfathers experience less difficulties than stepmothers in their relationships with their stepchildren. The studies reviewed indicate that stepchildren experience difficulties when their parents remarry. These difficulties are expressed in the form of less affection for the stepparent, feelings of being discriminated against and neglected, lower self-esteem and greater anxiety. Studies of stepchildren at maturity, however, have failed to detect significant effects of stepchildhood in a variety of measures. Thus, it appears that, although steprelationships present greater hardships for all involved, there are no dramatic long-term effects in adjustment.

Special problems of stepfamilies are reviewed, and advice offered from popular literature is noted. Research needs are identified and considerations for helping professions are noted. An annotated bibliography is included.

Contents

	Page
Foreword	iii
Abstract	iv
Introduction	1
Considerations About Methodology	5
The Samples	5
The Subjects	6
The Variables	6
The Empirical Literature on Steprelations	11
Estimation of the Incidence of Stepfamilies	12
Stepfathers	15
Stepmothers	18
Stepchildren	20
Special Problems of Stepfamilies	23
Discipline	25
Money	27
Relatives	28
Myths	29
Guilt	30
Ghosts	30
Law	31
Adoption	32
Incest	33
Names	34
Visitation	34
Territory	35

Implications for Research and Practice 37
Needs for Research 37
Role of the Helping Professions 40
Role of the Stepfamilies 42
Concluding Remarks 43
References 47
Annotated Bibliography 53

Introduction

The relationships expressed by the concept of stepparents are difficult to categorize and label. Stepparents have been labeled "non-parents," "half-parents," "acquired parents," "added parents," and "second (or third) parents." Stepfamilies have been referred to as "reorganized," "reconstituted," "blended," "combined," and "remarried." In addition, most terms associated with stepparenting seem to be surrounded by guilt or some undefined negative quality. In her now-classic study of remarriage, Bernard (1956) decided to avoid using the step terms:

> Because of the emotional connotations of the terms stepchild, stepmother, and stepfather, they are avoided whenever possible in the present study. For they are, in effect, smear words [p. 14].

In his inquiry into stepchildhood, Smith (1953) commented that, in spite of the frequent treatment of the theme in folklore, poetry, fiction, journalism, drama, and cinema, there was a paucity of scientific investigation on this subject. He reported that the popular usage of the term was generally associated with something neglected, inferior, or poor, and that stepchildren were frequently confused with adopted children. Of the 42 articles in Smith's bibliography, only 15 appeared in scholarly publications. Of these, six were in German and five were authored by Smith himself.

Empirical research has kept pace with the needs of families for authoritative information on stepparenting. In the last 10 years, however, there has been a marked increase in the number of books and articles directed to the general public. In recent years, some special publications such as *Single Parent Magazine* and *Parents' Magazine* have increased their coverage of topics relevant to stepfamilies. A newsletter, *Stepparents' Forum*, is directed at stepfamilies and profes-

sionals working with stepfamilies. Recent developments reflecting public interest include the establishment of the Stepfamily Foundation of New York,[1] and Remarrieds, Inc.,[2] a national organization with chapters in several States.

Before an attempt is made to review what has been written in the last decade, it is necessary to expand the focus of this paper. Its major purpose is to *describe and organize empirical information about stepfamilies.* The emphasis will be on (1) what the nature of the stepparent role is, (2) how individuals adjust to the demands imposed by the roles, and (3) how the special steprelationships affect the overall functioning of the family. It *will not* deal, in detail, with the stepfamily from the stepchild's point of view, his personality, adjustment, or other characteristics. A section will review some the the *nonempirical* literature which identifies problems and offers advice to stepfamilies.

Why should we concern ourselves with this special type of family? First, the stepfamily is a social phenomenon in its own right, with an incidence estimated to be between 10 and 15 percent of all the households in the United States. As a common variation of the way in which humans organize themselves to fulfill the basic functions of primary socialization, stepfamilies should be described in terms of how the various roles are defined and the nature of the relationships that develop. Second, the study of stepfamilies as naturally occurring variations of the nuclear household family can shed light on the family as a generic social institution. The stepfamilies vary with respect to marital history and socialization for marriage and parenthood. Finally, there is some indication that stepfamilies experience some problems because of their special nature and that for many of them problems common to natural families are more pronounced. Knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses, successful and unsuccessful coping strategies, and the conditions that increase the likelihood and intensity of their problems could provide an empirically sound basis for effective social intervention to support and strengthen these families.

In this paper we take the position that residence or custody of the children is a necessary condition to consider a family a stepfamily. Children who only visit frequently create, but also prevent, many special problems.

> A *stepfamily* is a domestic family [Winch 1971. p. 10] in which one or both parents have children from a previous union living most of the time in the same household. A

---

[1]Stepfamily Foundation, Inc., 333 West End Avenue (11th Floor), New York, N.Y. 10023.

[2]Remarrieds, Inc., Box 742, Santa Ana, Calif. 97202.

stepfamily is formed when an adult marries a natural parent; that adult becomes a stepparent to the children of the natural parent.

A *stepfather* is a man who marries a mother who has custody, irrespective of her previous marital status (i.e., unmarried, divorced or widowed) and of *his* previous status.

A *stepmother* is a woman who marries a man who has custody of his children, irrespective of previous status (i.e., unmarried, divorced, or widowed).

A *stepchild* is a child whose natural custodial parent has remarried (or married for the first time as in the case of unwed mothers).

Steprelations are not the same as "foster" or "adoptive" relations. (However, a stepchild can be legally adopted.)

A *remarriage* does not create a stepfamily unless there are children *and* they are brought into the household as more or less permanent residents.

Stepparenthood is an affinal relationship that is produced by, and is dependent on, the marriage that originated it. Once the marriage is dissolved, the steprelationship is also dissolved. This is a critical difference with the consanguinal parent-child relationship which is not dissolved by divorce.

The study of stepfamilies and steprelations is often associated with the study of marriage, divorce and remarriage. Some relevant literature is available covering the effects of a broken home, father absence, single-parent families, mother-headed families, etc.

288-655 O - 79 - 2

Considerations About Methodology

The Samples

The empirical literature of the *last decade* is based on the responses and experiences of no more than 550 stepfamilies. If we add to this number the sample used in the classic Bernard Study (1956), the total number increases to a little over 2,000. Those are the total figures for the empirical research found in this review[3] in North America. These are the studies quoted in the majority of the textbooks and other secondary sources.

Bernard (1956) presented data from 2,009 remarriages. Of these, only about 80 percent were true stepfamilies as we have defined them. Furthermore, Bernard did not interview her subjects. Rather, she made use of a network of informants (as opposed to respondents) who supplied as much information as they could on the remarriages with which they were acquainted. Bernard's sample, which contained only Caucasian individuals, formed the basis for most of the empirical information used by writers and reviewers in the following two decades.

Almost 20 years after Bernard's study, another sociologist, Lucile Duberman (1973, 1975) published a second comprehensive study of remarriage. Her sample consisted of 88 remarried couples selected at random from the records of Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Only 70 of the remarried couples were true stepfamilies, and, as in Bernard's study, only Caucasian couples were selected. Except for the exclusion of minorities,

---

[3]The review included a search through *Psychological Abstracts*, a computer search of the National Clearinghouse of Mental Health Information, a review of relevant notices of research of the Smithsonian Science Information Exchange, and the major journals such as *Journal of Marriage and the Family, Family Coordinator, Marriage and Family Living*, etc.

Duberman's sample was fairly representative of the population in the county in terms of religion and income.

The best approximation to a random sample included so far in a study was obtained by Bohannan (1975) in San Diego. The focus of this study, however, was primarily on stepfather families. Thus, the sample (N = 106) selected for extensive and intensive study consists of stepfather families exclusively. A subsample from Bohannan (N = 78) was selected by Buhr (1975) for a related study. In another study the sample consisted of 30 stepfather families in which LaRoche (1973) also interviewed the children.

The two most recent studies reported from Canada used a newspaper appeal to obtain volunteers. The first study was performed by Schlesinger and Stasiuk (1972) in Toronto, where they reported their sample (N = 96) to be predominantly white, Protestant, and middle class. The other study, part of a larger project, obtained a preliminary sample consisting of 70 volunteer couples (Messinger 1976).

Fast and Cain (1966) have written a paper based on work with about 50 stepfamilies in which the identified client was a child. Mowatt (1972) had three stepfamilies in group psychotherapy.

In summary, the size, composition, and representative nature of the samples from which most of the results of stepfamily studies are derived leave much to be desired. The studies that focused on stepchildren do not fare much better. The most often quoted study, that of Bowerman and Irish (1962), included only Anglo children.

The Subjects

The studies that constitute the bulk of the stepparent literature have used a variety of persons as the source of data. As noted earlier, Bernard (1956) relied on information obtained from informants; interviews with stepparents were used by Duberman (1975); interviews with stepparents and their children were used by LaRoche (1973); interviews and questionnaires were administered to stepchildren by Perry and Pfuhl (1963), and a post-factum analysis of survey data was performed by Wilson *et al.* (1975).

The Variables

The choice of variables for analysis and the comparison groups selected varies considerably. In the Bernard (1956) study, ratings of success of the remarriage were analyzed as dependent variables by breaking down the groups in terms of personal characteristics (age, educational level), socioecon-

omic variables (income, type of job), and attitudes toward various others (children, previous mates, self, spouses, etc.).

Duberman (1975) constructed indices of family integration, husband-wife relationships, parent-child relationships, step-sibling relationships, and attitudes of outsiders. These scores were obtained by combining various self-ratings and ratings assigned by the investigator. Among the independent variables used to analyze the data were age of husband and wife at the time of remarriage, their respective religions, educational levels, previous marital status, and presence or absence of children from the present marriage.

The Buhr (1975) study obtained measures of self-esteem and competence in order to compare the stepfather families with a matched sample of natural families.

Other studies have focused on the stepchild as a dependent variable. Bohannan (1975) explored the mental health of stepchildren and defined "child success" as the dependent variable. Bowerman and Irish (1962) constructed parent-child adjustment scales with data from questionnaires administered to high school students. Children from natural parent families were compared with those with stepfathers and those with stepmothers. To compare children from solo or broken homes with those of remarriage homes, Perry and Pfuhl (1963) employed three measures of adjustment (delinquency checklist, psychosomatic symptoms, and school grades). Wilson *et al.* (1975) selected a set of social and sociopsychological characteristics to compare their samples of youths raised in families with stepfathers and those raised by their natural parents.

The studies reviewed, in particular the recent empirical studies, are sociological and psychological in nature. A few articles discuss psychodynamic hypotheses related to stepchildren. Since they do not include systematic observations, they have not been included among the studies reviewed (i.e., Isscharoff 1967; Messer 1969). Others are clinical case reports of marginal interest (Simpson and Hawke 1970; Beere 1972; McCary 1972; Osman 1972).

Two summary tables of the empirical studies discussed are included. Table 1 contains a summary of studies focused on stepfamilies. Table 2 contains a summary of studies focused on stepchildren.

Table 1

Summary of Empirical Studies Focus: Stepfamilies

Author	Focus	Number Ss	Sample	Comparison Group N, Type	Approach/ methodology
Bernard (1956)	Remarriage	2009	acquaintances of remarried couples	none	written questionnaire
Fast & Cain (1966)	Stepfamilies	50	stepchildren & their families	none	clinical observation & interviews. Identified patient is the child.
Mowatt (1972)	Stepfamilies	3	problem step-families	none	clinical observation
Schlesinger & Stasiuk (1972)	Stepfamilies	96	remarried couples Caucasian	none	interviews with each spouse separately
LaRoche (1973)	Stepfathers	30	stepfather families	30 natural families	interviews & questionnaires with stepchildren
Bohannan (1975)	Stepfathers	106	stepfather families	84 natural families	interviews & case histories
Buhr (1975)	Stepfathers	78	stepfather families	74 natural families	interviews & questionnaires
Duberman (1975)	Remarriage	88	remarried couples Caucasian	none	interviews & questionnaires
Messinger (1976)	Stepfamilies	70	remarried couples	none	interviews

Table 2

Summary of Empirical Studies
Focus: Stepchildren

Author	Focus	Number Ss	Sample	Comparison group N, Type	Approach/ Methodology
Bowerman & Irish (1962)	Stepchildren	2145	junior/senior high school stepchildren	26,855 high school students	questionnaire
Perry & Pfuhl (1963)	Children of remarried & single parent households	267	stepchildren, grades 9-12	136 children of single parents	questionnaire
Burchinal (1964)	Stepchildren	210	stepchildren; stepfather & stepmother families	1230 unbroken families 126 mother only	questionnaire, interviews, & school record

The Empirical Literature on Steprelations

Stepparenting as a subject for research and inquiry is at such a primitive stage that it becomes a challenge merely to locate relevant literature. The steprelation terms do not commonly appear in indexes. Remarriage is one of the few applicable terms, but it does not always lead to literature related to stepparenting. This is as it should be, since not all remarriages result in stepfamilies, and remarriage is of interest to students of marriage, as stepparenting should be to students of parenting. When the term "stepchild" appears, it often leads to literature dealing with the stepchild as a special kind of child from a broken or disorganized home. Stepchildhood is used as an independent variable to explain or account for variables such as school adjustment, achievement, self-control, delinquent behavior, etc. In many cases it is necessary to weed out the results relevant to stepparenting from discussions of broken homes, father absence, father loss, etc.

The literature dealing specifically with stepfamilies and stepparents is analyzed here in terms of the purpose and nature of the inquiry. There is a growing number of books and articles that document, explore, and analyze steprelationships. Simon (1954) wrote, both as a journalist and from personal experience, about stepchildren. A fair amount of professional opinions and research is discussed in Simon's book. Maddox (1975) also explores from personal experience and interviews with stepparents and professionals the many facets of the stepfamily. Other recent books, such as Thomson (1966) and Roosevelt and Lofas (1976), include advice to current or prospective stepparents. A number of other books directed to professionals and laymen include chapters or sections on the special problems and characteristics of steppar-

286-855 O - 79 - 3

ents (i.e., Atkin and Rubin 1976; Baer 1972; Bilber and Meredith 1974; Gardner 1970; Gilbert 1975; Hunt 1966; James 1974; Lowe 1970; Satir 1972; and Steinzor 1969).

Another segment of the literature which consists of scholarly books and textbooks about marriage, divorce, and the family includes a chapter or section on remarriage and stepfamilies. Most of them contain adequate analyses of the problems and characteristics of the stepfamily, but often they have no reference to recent empirical data. Examples include Benson 1969; Cox 1972; Goode 1956; Fahs Beck 1976; Farber 1973; Le Masters 1974; Otto 1970; Sussman 1968; and Winch 1971.

The most important segment of the literature is made up of studies and reviews that focused on stepfamilies and stepparents. More surprising than the small number of studies that are truly empirical is the small number of real-life stepparents that have supplied the bulk of the data. An explanation for this apparent lack of interest in stepparenting on the part of researchers in general is offered in the concluding section of this manuscript.

It seems unlikely that the lack of empirical data will be remedied in the near future. Two programmatic efforts appear underway at the present time. Bohannan (1975) is embarked on a program of exploration of stepfathers and the mental health of their children. Messinger (1976) is principal investigator of a project on stepparenting conducted at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry in Toronto, Canada.

A search of research projects dealing with family and childrearing, retrieved from the files of the Smithsonian Science Information Exchange, revealed only one project out of 200 concerned directly with stepfamilies. Five additional projects indirectly touch on variables of interest to stepfamilies. Thus, unless there is a change in both the scientific community and the granting/funding agencies, only limited guidance in our attempts to upgrade our response to the needs of stepfamilies seems likely to be forthcoming.

Estimation of the Incidence of Stepfamilies

The relative frequency of steprelationships is an important element in demonstrating that stepparenting is a widespread phenomenon requiring consideration in its own right.

The basic sources for estimating the incidence of stepfamilies are the statistics gathered and published by the Bureau of the Census and by the National Center for Health Statistics. For the purposes of this review, no attempt was made to analyze primary census data; we have relied completely on secondary sources. The most comprehensive studies with information relevant to stepfamilies are those of Carter and

Glick (1970) on divorce and remarriage, Glick and Norton (1973), Glick (1975), and Norton and Glick (1976). In spite of the significant progress achieved in standardization and accuracy of the data gathering used by the Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics, the specific facts about stepfamilies remain difficult to obtain. Only beginning with the 1970 census has information about past marital history been included.

The most important statistics relevant to the formation of stepfamilies are those about remarriage. However, only those remarriages that include at least one custodial parent result in stepfamilies. Some first marriages also result in stepfamilies, for example, when an unwed mother marries for the first time. Several factors will cause the pool of parent candidates for remarriage to increase: an increase in the rate of divorce, an increase in the rate of unwed mothers, and an increase in widowhood. Of these, only the last index has decreased consistently during this century.

Between the mid-1950s and 1970, the rate of divorce per thousand married women under 45 years of age increased from 15 to 26 per 1,000. This represents a two-thirds increase over previous figures. The cumulative divorce experience during the lifetime has gone up steadily for successive generations of women. Only 12 percent of first marriages of women born at the beginning of this century are expected to end in divorce. In contrast, 25 to 29 percent of first marriages for women now in their thirties will terminate in divorce. In other words, between one in four and one in three women who are around 30-years-old today are likely to experience divorce during their lifetime. Moreover, some 5 to 10 percent of these 30-year-old women are likely to experience a second divorce (Glick and Norton 1973).

The upturn of the divorce rate is accompanied by an increase in the rate of remarriage. Between the mid-1950s and 1970 the remarriage rate per 1,000 divorced and widowed women under 55 years of age rose about one-third. About four-fifths of divorced women 30 years old have remarried or probably will do so (Glick and Norton 1973).

The analysis of 1970 census data led Glick (1975) to conclude that, in 1970, 15 percent of all children under 18 years of age were living with one or both parents who had been divorced after their first or most recent marriage. About three-fifths of these children were living with a stepparent, and the rest had been born after the remarriage. In addition, another 15 percent of the children were not living with both (formerly married) natural parents.

The proportion of school-age children living with both natural parents in their first marriage was less than 70 percent in 1970. In other words, only about 70 percent of the children

18 years or younger in 1970 were living with both natural parents who had been married once (Glick 1975). Glick concluded that 30 percent of the school-age population not living with a father and a mother in a continuous first marriage made this population, if not common, at least not rare. These children have far less cause to feel unique or exceptionally deprived. In spite of a declining birth rate, the total number of children involved in divorce was still rising in 1971, when it was close to one million (Glick 1975).

Using data from the 1970 census, Maddox (1975) estimated that there were about 8 million stepchildren, or about one out of every eight children. Cogswell and Sussman (1972) estimated that 15 percent of the population lived in "reconstituted" families.

In the past, general social and economic conditions of the country have had a great impact on marriage and divorce rates. Current trends, which include delay of marriage, increase in divorce, decrease in fertility rates, increase in remarriage rates, increase in premarital pregnancies, increase in education levels and income among women, and the current inflation-recession, make predictions for the future of stepfamilies difficult. Many socioeconomic indicators that have been linked to marital discord, such as young age at marriage, low education, and low-paying occupation, have been showing signs of improvement, particularly among women. Nevertheless, the divorce rate continues to rise. Norton and Glick (1976) suggest that the traditional institution of marriage and the roles of husband as breadwinner and wife as homemaker are changing. The growing acceptance of divorce as an alternative to an unhappy marriage, together with the elimination or easement of many barriers that traditionally inhibited divorce, are in part responsible for the continuing increase in the divorce rate. Some of this increase could be the result of a trend to advance the time of divorces that would have been spread over a longer number of years. Norton and Glick (1976) write:

> To the extent that the married state—but not necessarily being married only once—is a preferred status, available indicators may portend a relatively optimistic future for married life. The high divorce rate coupled with a high remarriage rate appears to signal a strong desire for a compatible marriage and family life [p. 18].

In summary, steprelationships have become a reality for more people than is commonly realized. Whether or not 10 percent to 15 percent of the families are stepfamilies (Cogswell and Sussman 1972; Bohannan 1975), current trends do not point to a decrease in these numbers. The most probable

changes will be in the relative composition of this group in terms of age, education, and income. Maddox (1975) enlisted the aid of demographer Paul Glick to estimate, using 1970 census data, that each year one million children under the age of 18 see a parent marry—750,000 after a divorce, 200,000 after the death of a parent, and 50,000 as children of unwed parents.

Stepfathers

There are more "practicing" stepfathers than stepmothers. Mothers with young children are overrepresented in the pool of people available for remarriage. Although there are about the same number of widows as widowers, about 80 percent of the divorced women are awarded custody of their children, especially when the children are young (Bohannan 1970). Also, unwed mothers who have custody of their children create stepfather families when they marry. Stepfather families were found 4.5 times as often as were stepmother families in San Diego (Bohannan 1975). Bowerman and Irish (1962) found stepfather families 3.2, 3.8, and 4.8 times as often as stepmother families in three different samples in Washington, Ohio, and North Carolina respectively.

Le Masters (1974) has pointed out the significance of the fact that in the decade of the 1960s more stepchildren resulted from remarriages following divorce than from remarriages following death. This indicates that the stepfather is increasingly less likely to be a replacement for a deceased father. A living father (or mother) creates additional complications in the role definitions and expectations of stepparenthood.

The role and behavior of the stepfather can be evaluated in terms of a comparison with that of the natural parent. Three recent studies have compared stepparents and their families with natural families. Bohannan (1975) found that stepfathers rated their stepchildren's happiness lower than natural fathers rated the happiness of their natural children. However, the wives and stepchildren did not perceive themselves as less happy than their counterparts in natural families. Stepfathers rated themselves as less successful than natural fathers, perpetuating a negative image of themselves. LaRoche (1973) found stepfathers more passive in their role with respect to discipline, guidance, and decisionmaking when compared with natural parents. Although there did not seem to be differences in frustration with the role of parent, there was greater emotional distance between stepfathers and stepchildren than between natural parents and their children.

Buhr (1975) also compared stepfather families with natural-father families. He found no differences in measures of self-esteem and competence between the two samples. There were no differences in the amount of readjustment demands and in the quality of the marital interactions. There was, however, a tendency for negative marital experiences to be less strongly associated with personal capabilities in stepfather families. This tendency could be interpreted as the extent to which the steprelationship contributed to stress in the marital relationships.

The comparison of stepfather families with natural-parent families in the Bohannan, LaRoche, and Buhr studies should serve to qualify the optimistic conclusions of Bohannan (1975). From the point of view of the stepchild's happiness and adjustment as a dependent variable, it is reassuring, as Bohannan stated, to find that he views himself as being just as happy as natural children and was found to be as successful and as achieving as natural children. The stepfathers, and the stepfamilies as a unit, however, were found to suffer from conditions arising from the steprelationships. Stepfathers were found by Bohannan to have a somewhat more negative image of themselves, by LaRoche to be more passive in exercising control and authority, and by Buhr to be more vulnerable to marital discordance independent of their personal capabilities. Bohannan found that, when the natural father was around and attempted to participate in the life of the stepfamily, there were more problems and tension. The resulting constellation (father, stepfather, mother, child) creates a complex social situation, even when all parties try to relate positively.

The previous three studies compared stepfamilies with natural families. Duberman (1975), in her study of a sample of remarried couples, obtained self-ratings in various areas of personal functioning, satisfaction, and attitudes toward children. However, she did not interview the children themselves. Using self-ratings and her own observations, she constructed several scores to reflect the quality of the family relationships. The most general score, labeled "Family Integration Score," reflected how close each member felt to his/her family. On the basis of the combined ratings, Duberman concluded that 45 percent of the families were high in family integration, 34 percent rated moderate, and 21 percent rated low. In the absence of a natural family comparison group, these various scores have to be used as dependent variables to compare stepfathers with stepmothers and to ascertain the relative influence of other factors. Duberman found that Protestant stepfathers reported excellent relationships with their children more often than Jewish, Catholic, or religiously unaffiliated stepfathers. The stepfather's previous marital

status was also found to make a difference in the quality of the stepfather-stepchildren relationships as reported by the stepfathers. Former bachelors reported better relations with stepchildren than those of men who had divorced and remarried.

Another way to look at the relative success of the stepparent is through the affection expressed by the stepchild. Bowerman and Irish (1962) found that, in general, affection of stepchildren for the stepparent was lower than the corresponding affection of the natural child for the natural parent. Some of the questions used to derive the affectional orientation scales, however, are biased in favor of natural parents. At least two of the five questions used are heavily dependent on time for the development of the kind of closeness that would produce a positive answer to that instrument. The shorter time that stepchildren have had to establish relationships with stepparents probably accounts for at least part of the differences.

Additional observations on the role of the stepparent come from special populations. Fast and Cain (1966) have written about their observations of stepfamilies involved in treatment where a child was the identified patient. They found that in their sample the stepfather role definition was poor, since stepparents were alternatively expected to be just like parents, additional parents to share in some responsibilities, or nonparents. Fast and Cain wrote:

> In this society, where some of the most obvious role functions of the father are biological, financial and educational, a stepfather cannot assume responsibility for biological fatherhood, frequently shares financial obligations with the natural father, and almost invariably shares the socialization of the child either contemporaneously as the child divides his time between two homes, or temporarily in the course of the two successive marriages [p. 486].

Attempting to resolve the pressures to be parent, nonparent, and stepparent often appeared as caricatures with excess emphasis on one alternative. More often, however, the three roles appeared interwoven so that in most cases there were considerable role stress and conflict.

In summary, the role of stepparent can be described as poorly articulated because it incorporates features associated with being both a parent and a nonparent. The determination of the proper balance—how much of a parent to be—requires the concurrence of the other principals involved, in particular the mother and the child or children. The stepfather role is unique because it requires acceptance, at a

conscious and formal level, on the part of the child and the mother. This reciprocal role behavior is critical in clarifying mutual expectations. The stepparent role is more open to conflicting definitions simply because there are more individuals with a legitimate reason to participate in its definition. These include the displaced former spouse, the present spouse, and the child who has to resolve the problems of conflicting loyalties. The available evidence from studies of normal populations indicates that the stepparent role *can be* performed adequately but that often it seems to generate less satisfaction than the role of parent. The twin handicaps of less time to establish the relationship and the potential stress derived from lack of role clarity could explain why the affection levels of stepchildren for their stepparents are more often lower than those of natural children for their natural parents. In spite of the difficulties, however, a significant proportion of the stepfathers *feel good about their performance and are recognized by their families as being good parents.*

Stepmothers

There is no question that the stepmother suffers from a worse reputation than the stepfather. Smith (1953) and Maddox (1975) have documented extensively the pervasive myths that have historically haunted stepmothers. Undoubtedly the prevalence of these negative expectations can only hinder the adjustment of an older child to a stepmother, and it can help to turn the myth into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The recent empirical literature is surprisingly sparse with regard to the stepmother. Their smaller number in the population relative to stepfathers makes them harder to find. In the Duberman (1975) study, stepmothers represented only 15 percent of the sample, compared with 38 percent for stepfathers. Three major recent empirical studies (Bohannan 1975; Buhr 1975; and LaRoche 1973) were restricted to stepfather families.

Duberman (1975) found that stepmothers were less likely than stepfathers to establish and maintain good relationships with their stepchildren. The explanation offered by Duberman has to do with the greater amount of time that stepmothers spend with their stepchildren, allowing more opportunities for disharmony and conflict. Stepmothers are more likely to have good relationships with younger stepchildren, whether boys or girls, than they are with older stepchildren. The younger child is more apt to be trustful and accepting; he has not developed strong and exclusive loyalties that can conflict with attachment to the stepmother.

Bowerman and Irish (1962) found that stepmothers received high ratings for affection three times less frequently than natural mothers in one sample and two times less frequently in the other two samples. In addition, stepmothers receive about twice as many low ratings for affection than natural mothers in all three samples. There is an apparent contradiction with Duberman's finding that stepmothers had better relations with younger children. However, the youngest group in these samples were children 7- to 9-years-old, which is considerably older than the preschoolers Duberman referred to. In one of Bowerman and Irish's samples, the best relations were with 10- to 12-year-old girls, who are more likely to imitate and identify with the parent of their own sex during this transition period.

Bowerman and Irish also found that stepmothers were more likely than stepfathers to be perceived as discriminating against the children—both boys and girls. This perceived discrimination was determined by asking the children questions about favoritism and whether or not they felt that harsher discipline was directed to them than to their siblings.

In one sample of the Bowerman and Irish (1962) study, stepmothers who replace divorced mothers were found to rate high in affection about twice as often as stepmothers who followed deceased mothers. The difference was significant to the .10 level. Knowing that custody after divorce is awarded more often to the mother, unless there are questions about her fitness or motivation, the results represent affection directed to stepmothers who replace mothers who chose (or were forced) to forego custody. In either case, the stepmother would be filling an emotional vacuum and really "saving the day" for the child. Such an interpretation, however, is not supported directly by the Bowerman and Irish study, since there is no indication about why custody in those cases was awarded to the fathers.

In summary, the limited empirical information confirms the difficult nature of the stepmother role. The best time to become a stepmother seems to be when the children are very young, before they have formed loyalties and attachments. A difficult age seems to be middle childhood, when the amount of control and contact required is probably the greatest. Pre-adolescence and adolescence are difficult periods in normal family situations, and in stepfamilies they are no exception. However, the general tendency to identify with the same-sex parent may help increase the affection level in older girls. However, older boys, too, seem to have more affection for stepmothers, and we find no explanation in the literature why this is so.

280-553 O - 79 - 4

Stepchildren

Do stepchildren carry with them a disproportionate load of unhappiness and emotional scars? If the stepfamily is more vulnerable to stress, ambivalence, and low cohesiveness than the family with natural parents, as Bowerman and Irish (1962) concluded, it would not be surprising to find that stepchildren reflect these negative conditions in their adaptation, self-concept, achievement, and future adjustment to adult life. However, the empirical evidence to confirm this is far from conclusive (Burchinal 1964).

The most recent study focusing on stepchildhood as an independent variable is that of Wilson *et al.* (1975). The authors reviewed the literature and concluded that the findings to date offered two alternative views. Some investigators feel that stepfather families provide a negative situation for children, while others reject that conclusion. Our own examination of the empirical literature indicates that, in general, there is a greater chance for conflict and stress in steprelationships. The potential for disruptive relationships is there. In many families, however, this potential is not realized, and the resulting family solidarity and emotional bonds are as high and as satisfactory as they are in natural families.

The effects of remarriage can be investigated in terms of the immediate impact on the children affected. As such, they will indicate current effects but not necessarily long-term projections. Bowerman and Irish (1962) surveyed school children and looked at affectional orientation, expressed preference for one parent over the other, perceived discrimination, feelings of rejection, and desire to emulate parents. In virtually all these measures and indices, the stepparents fared worse than the natural parents. These results, however, give us no indication of the long-lasting effects that these feelings could produce. In another study of the immediate effects of remarriage, Rosenberg (1972) measured self-esteem and anxiety level in terms of reported minor psychosomatic symptoms. His results indicate that children whose mothers remarried after divorce tended to have lower self-esteem than those whose mothers did not remarry and lower than those whose parents never divorced or separated. Similar results were obtained by comparing the frequency of psychosomatic symptoms reported by the children. He concludes that it is surprising that parental remarriage, rather than helping the psychological adjustment of the child, is associated with lower self-esteem and greater anxiety. Similar results were obtained with children whose parent had remarried after widowhood. Rosenberg reports that these results are independent of the age of mother or child.

Self-esteem and anxiety are very likely to be affected by the removal of a parent by death or divorce and also by the incorporation of a stranger into the family. After a period of emotional huddling together following the loss of one parent to the household, a certain level of psychological adjustment between child and parent is achieved. This adjustment is likely to be altered by the introduction of a new adult figure. The measurements of self-esteem and anxiety do not provide in themselves a view of the evolution of this emotional adjustment. Partial support for this interpretation comes from the same Rosenberg study. He found that the longer the child had lived in an intact family prior to death of a parent or divorce of the parents, the more evident were the negative consequences of remarriage.

Thus far, the evidence reviewed of the immediate effects on children points toward the negative consequences of becoming or being a stepchild. A study by Wilson *et al.* (1975) shows the long-term consequences. It consists of a secondary analysis of two sets of nationally representative data—the General Social Survey conducted in 1973 by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) of the University of Chicago, and the Youth in Transition (YIT) Survey conducted in 1973 by the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan. The purpose of the analysis was to determine if there were differences in social and sociopsychological characteristics between individuals raised in stepfather families and those raised in families with both natural parents present.

The characteristics investigated in this study included demographic, religious, socioeconomic, and political variables. The questionnaires used to gather the information also included questions about interpersonal relationships, marriage and the family, and personal evaluation. The NORC data were drawn from a sample of adults, both male and female, who reflected upon the circumstances of their family structure when they were about 16 years of age. The YIT data were drawn solely from 79 male respondents, adolescents who were at the time living as stepchildren in a stepparent family.

The NORC data provide a descriptive analysis of the effects of stepfather families upon stepchildren. Comparisons were made between 1174 natural-family children and 43 stepfather-family children. By Chi-square analysis, only 10 of the 68 variables considered emerged as differentiating between the two groups at a statistically significant level. When compared with children raised in their natural families, stepchildren were found to be older, more often reared as Protestants, more inclined to think that pornography leads to moral breakdown, had stepfathers whose level of

educational attainment was higher, had lower educational attainment and income themselves, were less inclined to feel that most people were helpful, and were less satisfied with their own conjugal family life. Considering the large number of variables (68), the overall bulk of the results supports the hypothesis of no differences between the two groups. The significant differences are suggestive of areas that require further research. They indicate that the stepfather experience may somehow interfere with educational and financial attainment, may put the stepchild on guard concerning the helpfulness and fairness of other people, and may affect his satisfaction with his conjugal family life.

The YIT data failed to confirm the general pattern of findings of the NORC sample. Only educational attainment appeared to differentiate between stepchildren and children raised in their natural families. This difference, however, did not hold when the effects of mental ability and parental socioeconomic status were controlled using partial correlations. Thus, the earlier NORC finding was not supported by the YIT results. The overall results from both studies support the conclusion that a child's experience as part of a stepfather family may be predominantly positive, predominantly negative, or mixed. These results agree with Burchinal (1964), who compared adolescents from unbroken, broken, and reconstituted homes and found no significant differences among them. The fact that no difference was found in self-esteem indicates that the differences found by Rosenberg (1972) with young boys and adolescents are not likely to continue into adulthood.

Bohannan (1975) interpreted these and his own results as indicating a need for a shift in emphasis for future research:

> We think the emphasis for further study should be on the fact that stepchildren arrive, by a kind of equifinality, at the point where they are on a par with the children of natural parents. The life-trajectories of children in the two situations are obviously not the same, and therefore their problems and their responses are not the same—only the overwhelming demand of the culture pattern in setting the goals (usually achieved) for the outcome. Further research should be directed to the specific kinds of adjustment such children must make and the long-term impact on character structure that dealing with two or more father figures creates [Bohannan 1975, p. 6].

Special Problems of Stepfamilies

Scholarly writings and empirical research indicate that the stepfamily has special qualities which place additional burdens on its members. The most salient of these characteristics is the point where we can identify the stepfamily's "official" beginnings—the prospective members have already had some experiences in other families that are highly relevant to their adjustment and future functioning. This can best be illustrated by describing the formation and development of a "natural" family.

The family is the social institution responsible for producing new members necessary for the continued existence of society. The family is entrusted not only with the physical/biological care of the infant but also with its preparation for life as a member of society. This process of socialization increases in complexity with the complexity of the society, its institution, norms, values, and organization.

In the United States, a family is usually formed through the sanction of civil and/or religious authorities. After a variable period of premarital contact or courtship, the society (State) becomes an interested party in the social contract we call matrimony. The State supports monogamy, and it does so by insuring that each individual has only one legal spouse at a time. To this end, in order to obtain a marriage license, each party must prove or promise that he/she is free to marry. The State is also interested in the well-being of children, and, after determining parental identities and responsibilities, it entrusts the family with responsibility for the child. Finally, the family, thus established, becomes the first party to inheritance rights, largely organized along blood lines.

In most contemporary families which are formed in this way, marriage signals the beginning of a new period of adjustment. Each partner brings to the marriage ideas of what

a family should be and what roles and responsibilities are involved. This anticipatory socialization takes place before the marriage. The preconceptions about how a family should function have been formed in the process of the socialization of each marital partner in his/her family of birth. To the extent that their families of orientation (or origin) are similar in social status, income, and religion, little conflict should be expected beyond the idiosyncracies of the marital partners themselves. Another important contribution to this anticipatory socialization for marriage derives from formal education about marriage and family life, increasingly more common in our secondary schools. Finally, some of the ideas that the new couple brings into marriage come from observations of their contemporaries, whether real-life people or the fictional picture presented in the mass media, particularly in television.

In most cases, the new family has a short period of adjustment to marriage before they take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The factors that shape the process of anticipatory socialization for parenthood are similar to those that affect socialization for marriage. In most new families, learning together about marriage and parenthood is a process that takes place over time. It is a natural, expected, socially defined and socially sanctioned aspect of family life, and each family goes through this process of development and growth.

In most stepfamilies, the start of the new family as a new social unit takes place superimposed over an ongoing socialization process that was interrupted by death or divorce. Unlike the first marriage, this time at least one of the partners has a history with a different partner. In many cases, only one of the members is a parent who has begun his/her socialization for parenthood, and the new partner has to start from behind. If on top of this situation we add the possibly unresolved emotional trauma caused by divorce or bereavement and the fact that the former spouses, if around, might feel they have a right in some way to control and dictate how the parenting function will be performed with their own children, we have all the elements necessary to create problems that are unlike anything that happens in the natural family.

Scholarly and popular writers have explored in books, essays, and articles the many faces of stepfamily life and its problems. Many writers explore stepfamily problems on the basis of personal experiences, and then they interview or seek advice and opinions from specialists in human behavior. At times, specialists in human behavior try to communicate directly with the general public or with stepfamilies in particular. From these sources a body of prescriptive advice has

been accumulated. Some of it is based on individual personal experiences and some on clinical experiences accumulated over a period of treating, advising, or helping stepfamilies. The materials reviewed here offer advice systematized around the most commonly identified problems that stepfamilies face. This advice is rarely grounded in empirical research. As demonstrated, the empirical literature is extremely limited. In the discussion here, no attempt is made to categorize or to establish relationships among the problems identified. The first three problems presented seem to be highest in terms of importance, judged by the frequency with which they are treated in the literature and in the available research findings. The rest seem to deal with emotions and feelings (myths, guilt, and ghosts), legal matters (law, adoption, and incest), and problems of organization (names, visitation, and territory).

Discipline

Along with adoption, discipline is a problem that is also common to natural families. However, it appears to be even more acute in stepfamilies.

Discipline involves the problem of control of the child's behavior, one of the important tasks of parenthood. Each child has to learn, usually inside the family, that there are social limits imposed on the behaviors that he is biologically capable of performing. Most types of behavior are permitted within restrictions of time, place, protagonist, and the like. The child must learn the socially acceptable limits for expressing his individuality and satisfying his various needs. Part of the problem is that many behaviors are intrinsically pleasurable, and even more soon acquire that value.

Several writers (Mowatt 1972; Steinzor 1969; Maddox 1975) refer to the "testing" experiences stepparents must endure from their stepchildren before the children will accept a stepparent as an authority figure. The issue is the perceived legitimacy of that authority. These writers also warn that children often will try to play one parent against the other. Steinzor (1969) feels that the stepchildren react with suspicion when a stepparent disciplines, because they think he is trying to take the absent parent's place.

Mowatt (1972), working with stepparents in psychotherapy groups, found that in matters of discipline wives wanted the stepfather to take disciplinary action with their children, but when they did, the wives went to the children's rescue, thus undermining the stepfather's authority.

Schulman (1972), in a discussion of the myths that intrude on the adaptation of the stepfamily, writes that stepmothers are often forced into the position of disciplinarian, because

the fathers take a passive role. The fathers, by default, are then seen by the children as the kinder parent.

Duberman (1975) found in her study that natural fathers of visiting children did not want to waste the precious time they had with their children as disciplinarians. Stepfathers without children of their own felt their wives were poor disciplinarians, but they were uncomfortable with disciplining the children themselves.

Satir (1972) feels that the stepparent should go slowly in taking the role of disciplinarian. Maddox (1975) and Thomson (1966) believe the natural parent and the stepparent should learn to share authority early in the relationship.

A further confirmation of the difficulties encountered by stepparents trying to discipline their stepchildren is found in the study conducted by Bowerman and Irish (1962). The stepchildren in the study felt uncertainty of feelings and insecurity of position greater than that of children in natural families. Stepparents were believed to discriminate more often against the stepchild by using harsher discipline and by showing favoritism for other siblings. The hesitance of many stepparents is thus justified because of the greater probability of perceived unfairness.

The advice often dispensed to natural families about the importance of both parents' sharing methods and goals for discipline seems to be even more critical to stepfamilies. Many discipline techniques are based on the existence of an affectional bond between parent and child. Love and approval serve as powerful reinforcers. In the stepfamily, it is necessary to take the time to develop those bonds before they can be used. In the initial adaptation period, the burden for providing legitimacy to the discipline function rests with the natural parent. Stepparents acquire this legitimacy by association with the natural parent until they have had a chance to develop their own affectional ties with the stepchild or stepchildren.

In the transitional period, discipline methods that are not heavily dependent on the existence of a strong affectional bond should be preferred. The consequences method (Dreikurs and Grey 1968) places the burden of choice and responsibility for behavior and misbehavior on the child himself. This is accomplished by the adult arranging situations so that certain actions of the child result in certain consequences. These consequences may be pleasant or unpleasant to the child, and the child rather than the adult decides what action to take. In the consequences method, the role of the adult is to arrange the situations and clarify the alternatives for the child, rather than to administer positive or negative reinforcements.

Money

Second only to discipline in frequency are the problems associated with money in the stepfamily. These problems relate to who earns it, who gives it, how it is spent, and on whom. In many stepfamilies, the financial responsibilities for the stepchildren are assumed by or shared with the stepparent. In others, the absent parent supports the children.

Bitterman (1968), in a discussion of the multimarriage family from the point of view of social casework, covers the many facets of money in the stepfamily. In some cases, she feels the new stepfather's masculinity is threatened if he is not the sole financial supporter of the stepfamily. He may feel uneasy about his wife's access to and handling of money from her former husband. There are often differences of opinion with respect to how the child-support money should be used—as part of the total family budget or for the designated child. This could create discriminatory practices when different children have access to different resources. Maddox (1975) writes of the sets of children who may live together but whose financial histories and future may be totally different.

Naturally, this problem is more acute in the low-income stepfamily where greater financial pressures impose limitations on the standard of living and limit the number of children the new couple may have.

Baer (1972) writes about the financial difficulties of the man who must support two or more families, and about the ex-husbands and their new wives who are convinced that the child-support money goes to finance the ex-wives' wardrobes. Steinzor (1969) says that support payments become the screen on which neurotic conflicts about money and people are projected.

One of the family's basic functions as an economic unit is to provide for the maintenance of its members. In modern society, money is at the heart of this function. For urban families, increasingly more isolated from their relatives, money can play an important part in the generation of tensions. Money is directly associated with such important aspects of family life as jobs, housing, and food. There is a great potential here for difficulties. Financial arrangements should strive to decrease differences between the children in the family in order to foster a sense of family unity. However, a centralized budget with common assets requires also the concurrence of the former spouse who contributes child support. Thus, many aspects of finances constitute a difficulty unique to the stepfamily.

288-933 O - 78 - 3

Relatives

Remarriage for reasons of death of spouse or divorce introduces many complexities into the kinship networks of the stepfamily. The in-law relationships of the parents (such as mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, etc.) have to be qualified by the use of "former," as in "former husband's parents." For the children, however, blood relationships such as grandparent, aunt, and uncle are not dissolved by remarriage. The new marriage, on the other hand, creates stepparents and stepaunts and stepuncles for the children.

Schwartz (1968) has written:

> The family of the remarried pair is often expected to function in the same way as a first-marriage family, despite the fact that in addition to the new husband and wife there may be two former spouses, two sets of children, four sets of grandparents, and numerous other relatives. New habits, roles and arrangements need to be established, not only for the primary family but also for the complex diverse extended family [p. 216].

Thomson (1966) cites remarriage studies that indicate that widowers' new wives are in for a difficult time from the relatives of the deceased wife, which in turn makes life uneasy for the children of the first marriage. She adds that relatives determined to discredit a stepmother can be extremely resourceful at throwing suspicion on her every act.

Maddox (1975) finds that stepfamilies in which there are three sets of children—those of the wife, of the husband, and from their present marriage—create the most difficult grandparent problem. The multisets of grandparents are inclined to show favoritism which creates competition among the children.

Duberman (1975) found that 41 percent of the members of stepfamilies in her sample felt their relatives were either indifferent or rejected them. This finding points to a lack of perceived support from the network that is closest to the stepfamily. It can only increase the sense of isolation and the potential for generalized stress. Anspach (1976) studied a sample of 32 remarried women. He found that children saw their father's kin less often when the father was absent. He found that the remarried women relied on their consanguine or "blood" kin for socioemotional support more than they did on the affinal or former husbands' relatives. The difference is that, to the children, the natural father's relatives continued to be consanguine, but to the divorced woman they ceased to be affinal kin after the divorce.

Bohannan (1975) found some differences between mother-headed households of different ethnic groups in San Diego. The brown (Mexican-American) mother-headed household appears to be set firmly into matrilineage; the black mother-headed household is set equally firmly into a widespread network of kinsmen and close friends, whereas the white mother-headed household tends to be isolated from kinsmen and (to a lesser extent) from dependable, cooperative friends.

These data indicate that there can be significant differences in the natural support networks for stepfamilies of different ethnic/cultural groups.

Myths

According to Schulman (1972), there are two basic kinds of myths that plague stepparents and have been passed down from the beginning of time. They are the myth of the wicked stepparent and the counter myth of instant love.

Literature and folktales abound with tales of the wicked stepparent. Some examples cited by Smith (1953) and Maddox (1975) are: Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Cymbeline;* Euripides' *Madness of Hercules*; von Schiller's *Don Carlos, A Dramatic Poem*; Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*; Dickens' *David Copperfield*; Nabokov's *Lolita*; and folktales *Hansel and Gretel, Snow White*, and *Cinderella*. Stepfamily writers (e.g., Bohannan 1970; Baer 1972; Schulman 1972; Tybring 1973) agree that the stepmother is particularly suspect and that the myth can actively interfere with family life. Maddox (1975) states that friends and neighbors delight in fostering the myth. Thomson (1976) writes that very often when schoolmates hear a friend is going to have a stepmother they regale the child with stories about stepmothers that are anything but reassuring.

Stepparenting writers are not particularly in agreement about why the myth is perpetuated or why the myth of the cruel stepmother is more blatant than that of the cruel stepfather. Maddox (1975) points out that the reverse comes closer to the truth—stepfathers are high in the statistics of child abuse. However, the writers are in agreement that the myth exists.

Maddox (1975) writes:

> The cruel stepparent myth survives because there is truth in it. Yet the well-meaning stepparent has only natural parenthood to use as a model for the alternative to the myth and that does not suit either [p. 152].

Most writers (e.g., Schulman 1972; Maddox 1975; Baer 1972) refer to the impossible expectations placed on the step-

parent and stepchild by the natural parent, the relatives, and society. These expectations are that the stepparent must love the child as if he were his own, and the child must love the stepparent as if he were his natural parent, and they should love each other immediately upon the forming of the new marriage.

Thus, while these ideal relationships are highly desirable to the new family, the harsh realities of interpersonal differences, societal pressures, and economic difficulties often do not make such an instant union readily or easily attainable.

Guilt

Guilt is a burden carried to one degree or another by every member of a stepfamily. For the custodial parent, the feeling of guilt is induced by depriving the children of the other natural parent. This situation is compounded by the custodial parent's uneasy suspicion that the children might not be welcomed into the new life by the new spouse (Fast and Cain 1966). For the stepparent—usually the husband whose children live elsewhere—the guilt arises from the fact that he spends more time with his stepchildren than with his own children just because of proximity (Satir 1972). For the children, it is the sense of divided loyalty, the feeling that they are not allowed the freedom to love whomever they want in the way they want (Satir 1972). For many stepparents, it is the feeling that the children are a financial burden, an emotional encumbrance, and often a reminder of the previous spouse (Fast and Cain 1966). Often stepparents counter their reactions by becoming "rigidly fair" (Schulman 1972). They become overly sensitive to any negative feeling exhibited by their spouses (Fast and Cain 1966) and they bend over backwards to try to love the child (Maddox 1975; Baer 1972; Tybring 1973). Discussing the excessively high standards of purity self-imposed by the stepparents, Maddox (1975) writers:

> Who is there to tell them that *wicked* thoughts and *bad* tempers are endemic among stepparents and that there is nothing unnatural about them [p. 79].

The unfair burden of cultural myths preys on the stepparent, often forcing standards that are impossible to attain, further adding to feelings of guilt.

Ghosts[4]

Ghosts are the shadows from the past, the feelings and memories that are carried over into the new marriage by

[4]The label "ghosts" was given to this problem category following some authors (e.g., Satir, 1972; Maddox 1975; Baer 1972) who used the term "ghosts" to refer to this phenomenon in the stepfamily situation.

both parents and children, whether the previous marriage was ended by divorce, desertion, or death.

Tybring (1973) writes that, if the previous marriage was ended by death, the remaining partner and children may tend to idealize the dead partner and parent. The comparison with the absent member, or the implication that the stepparent is not superior, or even as good as the dead spouse, is difficult for the stepparent.

Many writers (e.g., Fast and Cain 1966; Baer 1972; Mowatt 1972; Maddox 1975) are impressed by the obsession stepparents and their spouses seem to have about talking about the parent who is no longer there. Usually it is to vilify; sometimes it is to use the previous spouse as a weapon in marital disagreements, but rarely is it to praise the parent who did a good job. Despite the obsession with talking about the previous parent, they try to act as if that person does not exist. They go to great lengths to avoid meeting or communicating with the former spouse. Social events such as PTA meetings, graduations, and weddings become a problem. Bernard (1966) writes of the group photographs of the previous marriage and how they are usually hidden away.

Baer (1972) and Maddox (1975) recommend that the stepparent accept the child's feelings about the absent parent and never show resentment.

Thomson (1966) and Bitterman (1968) have discussed the problem of conflicting loyalties that beset the child because of his natural ties to the absent parent and his desire to establish emotional bonds with the stepparent. Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1973) discuss a view of family dynamics based on the invisible loyalties born out of indebtedness to other members of the family. The authors describe relations between the two partners in marriage as the meeting of two family systems. There are intergenerational, peer, and husband-wife loyalties that develop and must be kept balanced. A task of therapy is to achieve a rebalance of loyalties, an equilibrium that permits relations of equality among the members of the mature family. This conceptualization can help clarify the difficulties that can arise in a stepfamily where three families of orientation (ex-husband's, mother's, stepfather's) enter into a relationship in which members and loyalties can compete and conflict.

Law

This topic refers to the legal standing or the rights and duties of a stepparent as defined by law. Maddox (1975), Baer (1972), and Fast and Cain (1966) state that the status of the stepparent is not formally acknowledged by law, but that the stepparent is socially pressured to enact the role of *in*

loco parentis, that is, to assume the protective role usually attributed to the parent. Maddox states that this is a role that can be assumed voluntarily, then stopped if the stepparent ceases to maintain the child.

Maddox (1975) lists the following facts:

a. The stepchild has no rights of inheritance except in a few States which allow inheritance only if no other relative is found.
b. The absent parent continues to have the right to consent or refuse permission for a child's major surgery or for marriage below the legal age and to be notified of any legal action concerning the child.
c. The stepparent faces legal complications in maintaining custody of the child if his spouse dies. There are cases in which the stepparent gains custody over the blood relatives but not on the grounds of any parental rights, only on the basis of the child's welfare.
d. When a woman remarries she loses any welfare benefits she may have had, forcing the stepfather to assume someone else's financial obligations. New York and California have statutes imposing an obligation of support on stepfathers if the alternative is that the child will go on relief.

Maddox feels that, because of the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the law, stepparents should seek legal advice with respect to wills and other legal matters.

Adoption

Adoption is the procedure by which a legal parent-child relationship can be established. An adopted child has the same rights as a natural child, such as family name and inheritance.

Problems in relation to adoption center around whether or not stepparents should legally adopt their stepchildren. Maddox (1975) states that there is an increasing number of stepparents adopting their stepchildren, and she finds this practice highly controversial. She writes that many of the reasons underlying the adoption may not be healthy ones. Both Maddox (1975) and Thomson (1966) support the notion that stepparents should get professional counseling to discuss the families' attitudes toward such an emotional issue. Le Masters (1974) writes that stepfathers often want to adopt their stepchildren to please their wives. Schwartz (1968) writes about the questions the absent parent of the child must ask himself (i.e., whether the child will be better off as an adopted child; how he can still remain active in the child's life; what effect giving up his child will have on the child).

Duberman (1975) and Schlesinger (1968) found that, among their subjects, a great number of stepchildren were using their stepfather's surname, although not legally, to avoid social embarrassment. Schlesinger stated that a very high number of stepparents were favorably disposed to adopting their stepchildren, but for a variety of reasons they did not. Among the reasons mentioned were ignorance about the procedure, cost, inheritance complications, and opposition from the ex-partner and from older children themselves.

Steinzor (1969) believes that stepchildren are often anxious and feel displaced, especially when the married couple has children of their union, because the stepfamily has a different surname. However, he opposes adoption as a solution to anxiety over surnames, even if the child asks for it. According to Steinzor, this would be like treating feelings of rejection with actual rejection, and it would involve a superficial solution to a much deeper conflict. He believes that parents should seek help to fathom the complex and hidden reasons for the child's requests before attempting this inappropriate solution.

Adoption of a stepchild can contribute to the elimination of the very sources of insecurity and the undefined status of the stepchild. It represents a high level of interpersonal commitment from all the individuals to the future and continuity of the family. Considering the potential emotional investment, adoption should be explored with the same care given to other commitments that affect the whole family. The decision to adopt should include the concurrence of all parties involved after careful professional counseling.

Incest

When most writers (e.g., Bitterman 1968; Schulman 1972; Atkin and Rubin 1976) refer to incest or sexual tension in a stepfamily context, they are addressing the adults' fears of incestuous thoughts rather than the act of incest.

Mead (1970) is more explicit:

> We rear both men and women to associate certain kinds of familiarity in dress, bathing and relaxation, with carefully defined incest taboos in which the biological family and the single household are treated as identical. We provide little protection when individuals are asked to live in close contact within a single closed household, with members of the opposite sex to whom they have no consanguinous relationships. This leads to enormous abuses--girls are seduced by stepbrothers and stepfathers, men are seduced by precocious stepdaughters [p. 107].

Mead uses the term incest only when speaking of the taboo. Legally, sexual relationships between blood relations, not relationships between steps, are incest. It is child abuse if the child is a minor, adultery if the step is an adult. Only three States—Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi—consider sex relations between steps to be incest (Maddox 1975).

Schulman (1972) refers to the trap in which the stepfather is caught—wanting to please his wife by paying attention to her daughter and at the same time not wanting that attention to be misconstrued.

Mowatt (1972) speaks of the rivalry between stepfathers and their stepsons, and stepfathers' unspoken but apparent attraction toward their teenage stepdaughters.

Maddox (1975) writes that remarriage usually takes place during the middle years, and adults, particularly women, are afraid of comparing unfavorably with the youth in their family. She also feels that it is the active sex life between the new parents that "keep the sexual needs down."

All writers who discussed incest (e.g., Mead 1970; Baer 1972; Atkin and Rubin 1976) do refer to the absence of the incest taboo as making the ground rules unclear.

Names

"Names," as it is used here, refers to the kinship terms a stepfamily uses. Most writers (e.g., Bernard 1956; Mead 1970; Le Masters 1974; Tybring 1973), addressing this problem, mention the confusion that exists within and outside of the stepfamily with respect to names. They also refer to the dilemma of using the abhorrent step-terms. Mead (1970) writes about the need for new kinship terms, including those for the co-grandparents. Le Masters (1974) writes of the problems children have when one parent has been married many times and subsequently had many names. Bernard (1956) states that the child's difficulty in finding a suitable name for the new mother or father increases as he grows older.

Thomson (1966) refers to the confusion at school when children of the same household have different surnames. Maddox (1975) and Baer (1972) comment about the confusion children have when they have more than one "Mommy" or "Daddy." Maddox (1975) discusses the problems inherent in switching over to the stepfather's last name. Atkin and Rubin (1976) do not feel it is important what parental terms the children use as long as they do not distort the reality that the stepparent is not the real parent.

Visitation

Visitation rights are the rights given by law to the noncustodial parent. All writers (e.g., Satir 1972; Schlesinger 1968;

Steinzor 1969; Gilbert 1975), whether taking the point of view of the noncustodial parent, custodial parent, or stepparent, write about the tension and awkwardness of visitation. Polatin and Philtine (1975) say some ex-spouses seem to enjoy the inevitable awkwardness that calling for their child engenders, and the stepparent frequently tries to be absent for his predecessor's visits. Bitterman (1968) recounts that progressive weekend and holiday separations interrupt family life and that reintegration after visits is difficult. Baer (1972) feels that visitation rights are the ex-wife's greatest source of power over her ex-husband and that she can manipulate the visitation to the point that it damages the relationship between father and child. Thomson (1966) writes with sympathy of the societally frowned-upon mother who does not have custody and for whom visits are reminders. Steinzor (1969) talks about the younger child who needs regular visits and the older child who would rather spend weekends with his friends. Maddox (1975) and Baer (1972) write of the plight of the weekend stepmother and how she is a very unhappy, overworked lady.

Goldstein *et al.* (1973) have taken the position that it is in the best interest of the child to give the custodial parent complete control over visitation, going as far as supporting the banning of the noncustodial parent if deemed necessary. The justification for such a radical approach is to be found in the conflicts generated by the use or misuse of visitation as a weapon. However, both custodial *and* noncustodial parents can be guilty of using the child as a pawn in their unresolved divorce. Professional help should be used to determine *in each case* exactly what is really in the best interest of the child.

Territory

Territory is the place of residence in which the stepfamily lives and it includes the material possessions within that residence. Writers such as Bernard (1956), Schulman (1972), and Polatin and Philtine (1975) have written about territorial problems. Whose space and place is it? Schulman (1972) points out that a blended family in actuality consists of two subgroups. One subgroup is dominant over the other subgroup. (Dominance is determined by the residence in which both groups live, and it is claimed by the subgroup that lived there first.) Bernard (1956) ponders the questions stepfamilies must ask themselves about moving to another residence and the advisability of too many changes too fast for children. New homes and new parents at the same time may be overwhelming. Baer (1972) recommends that new stepfamilies move, and, if they do not, the wife should change the

house slowly and subtly in order to remove the former wife's presence and replace it with her own.

Maddox (1975) has written:

> Whose house is it? Whose spirit presides? Whose standard of living dominates? There is a school of thought that says to the new stepparent, 'move.' Make a fresh start even if you have to take a heavy mortgage, change the children's schools, and commute four hours a day [pp. 132-33].

In the literature reviewed, no one discussed how the low socioeconomic stepfamily could reconcile the problems associated with territory. This reflects a white middle-class bias evident in the popular literature that ignores the multicultural nature of society and the impact of socioeconomic level on how people cope with problems.

Implications for Research and Practice

Needs for Research

Virtually every writer and researcher in the area of stepparenting has pointed out the great need for more research. The review of empirical literature indicates definite areas where the need is greatest:

Demographic Research

To date, most comprehensive family studies have not dealt directly with stepfamilies. The focus has been on marriage, divorce, and to some extent remarriage (Carter and Glick 1970; Glick 1975). Now, however, there is a wealth of specialized data collected by the Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. Beginning with the 1970 Census, data have been collected on the marital history of individuals, as well as current marital status. This information will make possible a more precise assessment of the size and composition of the stepfamily population.

Two main goals can be stated for demographic research. The first is to describe the stepfamily population using the demographic variables that are currently available, such as age of marriage partners, age and number of children, marital history, education, socioeconomic status, ethnic group, urban-rural, regional breakdowns, etc. These data will provide profiles and distribution patterns for stepfamilies and will facilitate the identification of the most common types. This information will help future researchers select special samples for indepth studies. In addition, social service agencies will be able to use this information for program planning (Cogswell and Sussman 1972).

The second goal for demographic research is to identify trends that are likely to affect the size and composition of

the stepfamily population in the next 10 to 20 years. This information will help researchers and practitioners identify high-risk subpopulations for special longitudinal studies and program planning.

Thus, the overall goal for demographic research, which is now finally within reach, is to describe the stepfamily population precisely and to determine its size, composition, and likely future development.

Descriptive Research

Some of the empirical studies which were reviewed are descriptive in nature (i.e., Duberman 1975; Schlesinger and Stasiuk 1972). However, special effort is needed to provide more adequate descriptive studies which distinguish among three commonly identified types of stepfamilies: stepfather families, stepmother families, and families where both parents are stepparents. Also, it is clear from the analysis of the samples in the studies that various types of Anglo stepfamilies have been included and that minority stepfamilies have been neglected almost completely. More attention is needed to describe the characteristics of minority and lower-class stepfamilies, as there is some indication that important differences exist in the natural support systems available to families of different ethnic backgrounds (Bohannan 1975). Because of the scarcity of systematic data on stepfamilies, it is suggested that future studies collect descriptive information on practices that have been used by stepfamilies to solve some of the smaller and more practical problems associated with parenting someone else's child. The sharing of this information can begin to build a repertoire of practical advice that, coupled with results from basic research on stepparenting relationships, can produce well-documented and solid "how to" books and other educational materials.

In the process, these studies should document the strengths and successes of stepfamilies. It has already been hinted that many stepfamilies are not radically different from regular families in terms of satisfaction and happiness. Empirical studies which document this idea can help fight the burden of myths that make stepparenting even harder than it should be.

Descriptive studies also need to incorporate longitudinal approaches to describe the process by which a stepfamily develops solidarity and to determine how the multiple social adaptation factors manifest themselves. A useful approach is that of Kantor and Lehr (1975). They employ a systems model to describe family dynamics as they develop over time. The more innovative aspects of their study include careful consideration of the "ecological" aspects of family life, the regulation of physical and psychological distance, and the interplay of roles and relationships.

Another interesting approach used by Bohannan (1975) for indepth studies of a few stepfamilies involves using mental health professionals in the role of interviewer/researcher. However, as was pointed out above, it is important that future descriptive studies avoid using a pathological model when studying stepfamilies. Cogswell (1975) has argued for considering variant family forms, including stepfamilies, as full, legitimate variations in family structure rather than as deficit or incomplete families.

Hypothesis Testing

Goal-directed research should begin a detailed examination of both the similarities and differences between stepparenting and natural parenting *and* the similarities and differences between different types of stepfamilies. By testing hypotheses derived from the special characteristics common to stepfamilies and comparing the results with studies of natural families, we will have a clearer understanding of the special characteristics of stepparenting and of characteristics common to all parenting, step or otherwise.

A stepfamily is a family unit that attempts to approximate the ideal conditions of the regular family in which mother-father-child are linked by social and emotional bonds. These bonds insure continuity of the family unit and provide the basis for the ascribed family functions of procreation and socialization. One concern of future research should be to examine how these bonds are established in newly formed stepfamilies.

This projected research will have to take into consideration two distinguishing characteristics of stepparenting relationships as opposed to natural parenting relationships:

a. The stepparenting relationship starts at some point *after* an original relationship has been discontinued or significantly altered, whether by removal or death of the parent or by decrease in the frequency and intensity of contact.
b. The stepparenting relationship has to be established in addition to (supplementing) or instead of (replacing) an already existing relationship. The degree of interference from the previous relationship, whether positive or negative, will be an important factor in the newly established relationship. It should be noted that the "ghost" of the former parent has the strongest influence over children left behind, and secondarily influences the former spouses. Thus, the new parent has to work simultaneously toward establishing the husband-wife relationship *and also* the stepparent-stepchild relationship. In the case of both spouses bringing their children into the relationship, the degree of complexity is increased not only in terms of making both spouses par-

ents and stepparents simultaneously but also adding, for the children, the relationship of stepsiblings. If, furthermore, the new couple bear children of their own, a new set of half-sibling relationships is introduced. Any increase in structural complexity introduces greater variability and tends to complicate the issues.

The potential complexity of the different types of stepfamilies makes it advisable to control for the structural type of family in small-scale studies. By control of structural type, the results for different stepfamilies can be compared. These studies can then use stepfamilies and compare them to natural families as a kind of "natural experiment" to study parent-child relationships where attachment, identification, and modeling effects can be examined. The variables that can be examined include length of the parent-child/stepparent-stepchild relationship, age of children at the onset of the relationship, and frequency and intensity of contacts. Research that ties stepparenting relationships to the larger issue of parent-child relationships will produce results relevant to parenting in general.

Role of the Helping Professions

The special characteristics of the stepfamily are likely to affect all areas of family life. Different professionals come in contact with the stepfamily and its members in the context of education and social services.

Some of the papers reviewed were written by professionals in clinical practice (e.g., Fast and Cain 1966; Mowatt 1972; Schulman 1972). Others were written from the perspective of social work (e.g., Bitterman 1968; Schwartz 1968). Taken together, they point to some basic problems that need to be considered in working with stepfamilies.

First, stepparents experience difficulties in establishing relationships, a result of conflicting pressures to act as parent, nonparent, and stepparent. These society-based problems of role definition are complicated by the insufficient time a new stepparent has for learning the role of parent and by the absence of the support that natural parents enjoy.

Second, these organizational disturbances in stepfamilies make them especially vulnerable to dysfunction. This vulnerability will give way to disturbances *if and when* personal/individual psychological factors interact with the family-based disturbances arising from lack of role clarity. These are the cases that finally reach social and psychological service agencies.

Third, many of the disturbances that take place in the stepfamily arise from unresolved emotional problems that

are related to the termination of the previous marriage. Divorce is often just a legal dissolution; emotional and financial ties remain. In addition, children constitute the bridge between the remarried family and the former partner. Often, this relationship interferes with the reciprocal acceptance that the stepparent requires from the stepchildren to enable him to assume the role of parent—either as stepparent (replacement) or as an additional parent.

Fourth, stepfamilies suffer from the weight of societal expectations. The myth associated with "the bad stepmother" and the counter myth of "instant love" (Schulman 1972) place an additional burden on the family, which adds to the already existing lack of role definition.

The helping professions need to be aware of the dangers of using a health-illness model which leads them to see the stepfamily in terms of pathology. The cure can then only be found in the approximation of the normative pattern of the nuclear family (Fast and Cain 1966). A more promising alternative is to consider the stepfamily as a structural variation. Both Sussman and Cogswell (1972) and Cogswell (1975) have called for a recognition of the many alternative family forms that are currently found in the society. This recognition of variations without implications of deficit was also advocated in the resolutions of the White House Conference on Children in 1970 (1971).

The opportunities for intervention on the part of social service agencies can begin with marital and divorce counseling. Many of the problems in remarriages can be traced to unresolved issues in the divorce that preceded the remarriage. Divorce requires the reorganization of the entire family, with redefinitions of roles and relationships, particularly when remarriage takes place (Schwartz 1968). Professionals in the family service field can provide counseling and guidance at the critical points of change.

The potential for teaching about stepfamilies is great at all levels of the educational system. Education plays a key role in the anticipatory socialization for marriage and parenthood. Since it is estimated that about 30 percent of all school-age children do not live with both natural parents (Glick 1975), the problems of alternative family structures require sensitive treatment. Courses designed in the context of Family Life Education and Education for Parenthood in high school need to devote more attention to stepfamilies. There is great potential for dealing with remarriage and stepfamilies in nondegree special courses that community colleges offer.

Role of the Stepfamilies

Recent developments indicate an increase in the level of activity and visibility of stepfamilies as a special interest group. *Stepparent's Forum*, a bimonthly newsletter originating in Canada, has provided for a lively exchange between stepfamilies and professionals. Started in April/May of 1975, this newsletter has covered many of the problem areas reviewed in the previous section. It has also presented information on research and other activities in progress and has reviewed books of interest to stepfamilies. Most important has been its role in showing many stepfamilies that their problems are not unique and that there are coping strategies that have proved successful.

Another recent development is the Step Family Foundation of New York. Its goals include creating public awareness of the very specific dynamics and problems of steprelations, serving as a clearinghouse for information and further research, providing speakers to groups, and publishing a newsletter. Step Awareness Workshops are also offered.

The role of steppeople as a lobby and as vocal, organized clients of social service agencies can increase the range of services directed to them. The pressures applied by steppeople will certainly affect the amount and variety of research needed to respond more effectively to their needs.

Concluding Remarks

At the beginning of this paper we noted the limited amount of empirical information available despite the universal expressions of concern for the problems of stepfamilies from researchers and professionals. On the other hand, there is no shortage of written advice. How can this be explained?

First, stepfamily research is more difficult than other kinds of family research. There are difficulties in locating stepfamilies; until recently only present marital status was ascertained in the census form. Stepfamilies are reluctant to identify themselves as such, and children often change their family names in order to hide the steprelationship. Their small numbers in the population require a great effort to reach a sufficient number for a study sample.

Second, it appears that *many people do not consider stepfamilies a social problem; on the contrary, they are the solution to the social problems created by the one-parent family.* Although it is recognized that stepfamilies have some special problems, they are, in some informal scale, less severe and less critical than those problems affecting one-parent families or "broken homes." There has been considerable attention given in research literature to the one-parent family and father absence (e.g., Herzog and Sudia 1971; Schlesinger 1969; Bane 1976). The implicit assumption seems to be that it is better to have a stepparent than a one-parent family.

The third and last partial explanation has to do with a pervasive, subjective feeling that we already know enough about the special characteristics of the stepfamily. This subjective feeling probably comes from the fact that most people have had some experience with steprelations. As an exercise, the reader could run a quick survey among co-

workers and acquaintances. The chances are great that a variety of steprelationships would be represented in that sample. The authors of this report are both part of stepfamilies. The senior author was raised as a stepchild; the junior author is a remarried custodial mother.

However, recent developments are challenging the validity of the partial explanations offered. Despite the difficulties involved, some research has been conducted, often with limited funding. It is significant that three recent empirical studies were doctoral dissertations (Buhr 1975; Duberman 1975; and LaRoche 1973). There are some methodological innovations that will facilitate research. Bohannan (1975) reports on a sampling technique he refers to as the "Criss Cross Snowball." It consists of obtaining referrals to stepfamilies from a random sample of households. In that way, a sufficient number of cases can be identified more efficiently. The group obtained is likely to be as representative as the original sample. The new census forms also represent a great methodological improvement.

The second partial explanation is being challenged by the increased visibility that stepfamilies are achieving through their special-interest organizations and publications. As clients of social agencies, they are demanding more attention. To them, their special needs *are important and worthy of attention.*

Finally, the subjective feeling that we actually know enough about stepfamilies should suffer from the recognition that the systematic data that we have actually come from a very limited sample of the stepfamily population. The gross neglect of minorities and low-income groups casts doubts on the applicability of much of the information we now have to stepfamilies' problems.

In conclusion, recent developments point toward a greater level of activity in the area of the stepfamily, both in terms of research and in the form of social services directed to stepfamilies.

What is the future of the stepfamily as a structural variety? Within the next 10 to 20 years, the number of stepfamilies could experience a moderate increase. The most important changes are likely to be in the ethnic and income composition of the stepfamily population.

If we are willing to believe the predictions offered by Rogers (1968) about the future of man-woman relationships in the year 2000, stepfamilies are likely to decrease in numbers. Rogers sees a trend toward greater openness and freedom in sexual relations. This will be accompanied by advances in birth-control methods that will make infertility the rule requiring affirmative action for pregnancy to occur. This will effectively eliminate unwanted pregnancies and will serve to

separate marriage from parenthood. Parenthood will represent a higher level of mature commitment with far greater chances for a compatible life.

But we live in the 1970s. For the time being, the most promising developments for the stepfamily are to be found in the greater acceptance of the concept of no fault divorce. To the extent that we are able to remove the adversary quality and the stigma of failure from divorce, we can expect better adaptation of the family to postdivorce life and greater chances for moving into remarriage free from the burdens of marital traumas and unfair societal pressures. Removing the handicaps with which a stepfamily begins its life is the least that can be done. It should have an equal chance with all other families to begin relationships without these burdens.

References

ACI Films, Inc. *Honeymoon.* New York: ACI Films, Inc., 1974.

Anspach, D.F. Kinship and divorce. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 38(2): 323-330, 1976.

Atkin, E., and Rubin, E. *Part-Time Father.* New York: Vanguard, 1976.

Baer, J. *The Second Wife: How to Live Happily with a Man Who Has Been Married Before.* New York: Doubleday, 1972.

Bane, M.J. Marital disruption and the lives of children. *Journal of Social Issues,* 32: 1, 1976.

Beere, D.B. Why do you have to go through this?: A series of interpersonal events. *Psychiatry* (Journal for the study of interpersonal processes), 25 (1): 67-77, 1972.

Benson, L. *Fatherhood: A Sociological Perspective.* New York: Random House, 1969.

Bernard, J. *Remarriage.* New York: Dryden Press, 1956.

———. *The Future of Marriage.* New York: World Publications, 1972.

Bilber, H., and Meredith, D. *Father Power.* New York: David McKay, 1974.

Bittermann, C.M. The multimarriage family. *Social Casework,* 49: 218-221, 1968.

Bohannan, P., ed. *Divorce and After.* New York: Doubleday, 1970. Anchor Books, 1971 (paperback).

———. Stepfathers and the Mental Health of Their Children. Final report to National Institute of Mental Health, Dept. of HEW. December, 1975.

Boszormenyi-Nagy, I., and Spark, G.M. *Reciprocity in intergenerational Family Therapy.* Hagerstown, Md.: Harper & Row, 1973.

Bowerman, C.E., and Irish, D.P. Some relationships of stepchildren to their parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 24: 113-121, 1962.

Buhr, K.S. *Stress, Marital Interaction, and Personal Competence in Natural Parent and Stepfather Families.* Unpublished dissertation. Ann Arbor, Mich., 1975.

Burchinal, L.G. Characteristics of adolescents from unbroken, broken, and reconstituted families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 26: 44-50, 1964.

Carter, H., and Glick, P.C. *Marriage and Divorce: A Social and Economic Study.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Cogswell, B. Variant family forms and life styles: Research of the traditional nuclear family. *Family Coordinator*, 24 (4): 391-406, 1975.

Cogswell, B., and Sussman, M. Changing families and marriage forms: Complications for human service systems. *Family Coordinator*, 21 (4): 505-516, 1972.

Cox, F.D. *American Marriage.* Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown Co., 1972.

de Vienne, D., ed. *Stepparents' Forum.* Montreal, Canada, 1975.

Draughon, M. Stepmother's model of identification in relation to mourning in the child. *Psychological Reports*, 36: 183-189, Feb. 1975.

Dreikurs, R., and Grey, L. *A New Approach to Discipline: Logical Consequences.* New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968.

Duberman, L. Stepkin relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 35: 283-292, May 1973.

———. *Marriage and Its Alternatives.* New York: Praeger, 1974.

———. *The Reconstituted Family.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975.

Fahs Beck, D. *Marriage and Family under Challenge.* New York: Family Service Assoc. of America, 1976.

Farber, B. *Family and Kinship in Modern Society.* Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1973.

Fast, R. and Cain, A.C. The stepparent role: Potential for disturbances in family functioning. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 36: 485-491, 1966.

Felt, H., and Felt, M. *Stepparenting: New Families, Old Ties.* Boston: Polymorph Films, 1977.

Gardner, R.A. *The Boys and Girls Book about Divorce.* New York: Jason Aronson, 1970.

Gettleman, S., and Markowitz, J. *The Courage to Divorce.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974.

Gilbert, S.D. *What's a Father For?* New York: Parents' Magazine Press, 1975.

Glick, P. A demographic look at American families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 37 (1): 15-26, 1975.

———. *Some Recent Changes in American Families.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

Glick, P.C., and Norton, A.J. Perspectives in the recent upturn in divorce and remarriage. *Demography*, 10 (3): 301-314, 1973.

Goldstein, J., Freud, A., and Solnit, A.J. *Beyond the Best Interests of the Child.* New York: Free Press, 1973.

Goode, W.J. *After Divorce.* Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956.

Hensey, . . *Help for Single Parents.* Jackson, Miss.: Christian Action Commission, 1973.

Herzog, E., and Sudia, C.E. Fatherless homes: A review of research. *Children,* Sept.-Oct., 1968. pp. 177-182.

———. *Boys in Fatherless Families.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

Hunt, M.M. *The World of the Formerly Married.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

Isscharoff, A. Hyppolytus as an alternative to Oedipus: A study in triangular relationships. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics,* 15 (1): 32, 1967.

James, M. *What Do You Do with Them Now That You've Got Them?* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1974.

Kantor, D., and Lehr, W. *Inside the Family: Toward a Theory of Family Process.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975.

Katz, S.N. *When Parents Fail: The Law's Response to Family Breakdown.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.

LaRoche, S.S. The Role of the Stepfather in the Family. Unpublished dissertation. University of New Mexico, 1973.

Le Masters, E. *Parents in Modern America.* Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1974.

Lowe, P.T. *The Cruel Stepmother.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Maddox, B. *The Half-Parent.* New York: M. Evans, 1975.

McCary, J.L. Nymphomania: A case history. *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality,* 6 (11): 192, 1972.

McCormick, M. *Stepfathers: What the Literature Reveals.* La Jolla, Calif.: Western Behavioral Science Institute, 1974.

Mead, M. Anomalies in American post divorce relationships. In: P. Bohannan, ed. *Divorce and After.* New York: Doubleday, 1970.

Meriam, A.S. Stepfather in the Family. *Social Service Review,* 14: 655-677, Dec. 1940.

Messer, A.A. The "Phaedra Complex." *Archives of General Psychiatry,* 21 (2): 213-218, 1969.

Messinger, L. Remarriage between divorced people with children from previous marriages: A proposal for preparation for remarriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling,* 2 (2): 193-200, 1976.

Mowatt, M.H. Group Psychotherapy for stepfathers and their wives. *Psychotherapy Theory Research and Practice,* 9 (4): 328-331, 1972.

Norton, A.J., and Glick, P.C. Marital instability: Past, present and future. *Journal of Social Issues,* 32 (1): 5-20, 1976.

Nye, F.I., and Berardo, F.M. *The Family: Its Structure and Interaction*. New York: Macmillan, 1973.

Olshaker, B. *What Shall We Tell the Kids?* New York: Dell Publishing, 1971.

Osman, S. My stepfather is a she. *Family Process*, 11 (2): 209-218, 1972.

Otto, H.A., ed. *The Family in Search of a Future: Alternate Models for Moderns*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970.

Perry, J.B., and Pfuhl, E.H., Jr. Adjustment of children in "solo" and "remarriage" homes. *Marriage and Family Living*, 25: 221-223, 1963.

Polatin, P., and Philtine, E.C. After divorce: Another marriage? *Single Parent Magazine*, 18 (6): 5-8, 25, 1975.

Rallings, E.M. The special role of the stepfather. *The Family Coordinator*, 25: 445-449, 1976.

Ramos, S. *Teaching Your Child to Cope with Crisis*. New York: David McKay, 1975.

Reingold, C.B. *Remarriage*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

Richards, A., and Willis, I. *How to Get It Together When Your Parents Are Coming Apart*. New York: David McKay, 1976.

Rogers, C. Man-woman relationships: USA 2000. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 4 (3): 270-272, 1968.

Roosevelt, R., and Lofas, J. *Living in Step*. New York: Stein and Day, 1976.

Rosenberg, M. The broken family and self-esteem. In: I.L. Reiss, ed. *Readings on the Family*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972. pp. 518-530.

Satir, V. *Peoplemaking*. Palo Alto, Calif.; Science and Behavior Books, 1972.

Satir, V.; Stachowiek, J.; and Taschman, H.A. *Helping Families to Change*. New York: Jason Aronson, 1975.

Schlesinger, B. Remarriage and inventory of findings. *Family Coordinator*, 17: 248-250, 1960.

———. *The One Parent Family: Perspectives and an Annotated Bibliography*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969.

Schlesinger, B., and Stasiuk, E. Children of divorced parents in second marriages. In: I.R. Stuart and L.E. Abt, eds. *Children of Separation and Divorce*. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972. pp. 19-35.

Schulhoffer, E. Short term preparation of children for separation, divorce and remarriage. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 43 (2): 248-249, 1973.

Schulman, G.L. Myths that intrude on the adaptation of the stepfamily. *Social Casework*, 53: 131-139, 1972.

Schwartz, A.C. Reflections on divorce and remarriage. *Social Casework*, 49: 213-217, 1968.

Simon, A.W. *The Stepchild in the Family: A View of Children in Remarriage*. New York: Odyssey Press, 1964.

Simpson, J.S., and Hawke, W.A. Self-mutilation: A case of a 13-year-old girl. *Pediatrics*, 46 (6): 1008-1011, 1970.

Smith, W.C. *The Stepchild*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

Spicer, J.W., and Hampe, G.D. Kinship interaction after divorce. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 37 (1): 113-119, 1975.

Steinzor, B. *When Parents Divorce*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.

Stuart, I.R., and Abt, L.E. *Children of Separation and Divorce*. New York: Grossman, 1972.

Sussman, M.B., ed. *Sourcebook of Marriage and the Family*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

Sussman, M.B. (Chairman) Changing families in a changing society. In: *White House Conference on Children, 1970 — Report to the President*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

Sussman, M.B. and Cogswell, B.E. The meaning of variant and experimental marriage styles and family forms. *Family Coordinator*, 21 (4): 375-381, 1972.

Thomson, H. *The Successful Stepparent*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

Tybring, J.B. Remarriage: Parenting Someone Else's Children. Forum No. 2, 1973. Wisconsin Psychiatric Institute.

Walters, J., and Stinnet, N. Parent-child relationships: A decade review of research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 33: 82, 1971.

White House Conference on Children, 1970 — Report to the President. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

Williams, Q.M., and Kuhn, R.P. Remarriages. *Vital and Health Statistics*, 21 (25): 1-27, 1973.

Wilson, K.L.; Zurcher, L.A.; McAdams, D.C.; and Curtis, R.L. Stepfathers and stepchildren: An exploratory analysis from two national surveys. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 37 (3): 526-536, 1975.

Winch, R. *The Modern Family*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971.

Wiseman, J., ed. *People as Partners*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

Annotated Bibliography

ACT Films, Inc. *Honeymoon.* New York: ACI Films, Inc., 1974.

A young girl's adjustment to her mother's remarriage, her new stepfather, and stepbrother is portrayed. At first she resents the newcomers, but kindness and patience win her over to a new level of acceptance and understanding. The film is designed for presentation at an elementary level.

Atkin, E., and Rubin, E. *Part-time Father.* New York: Vanguard Press, 1976.

Based on their observations as therapists with children of all social strata, the authors give commonsense advice directed at the divorced father without custody of his children. It deals with a variety of emotional and day-to-day problems a father and his children must adjust to during the different stages of children's development and the different stages of altered family life. Focus is placed on the continuing potential opportunities for a fulfilling relationship between the father and his children. Of particular interest are the chapters on remarriage and the extended family containing steprelations.

Baer, J. *The Second Wife.* Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972.

The author gathered information from 220 interviews with white middle-class second wives, a questionnaire survey of 100 female members of Remarrieds, Inc., and personal observation and experience. It is a journalist's report on the mores, experiences, problems, and solutions of second wives. Suggests ways to succeed as a "week-end stepmother" and as "the full-time mother." Contains an Appendix listing the currently active organizations formed to fight for divorce reform, and groups which give counsel to remarrieds; and a bibliography.

Benson, L.G. *Fatherhood: A Sociological Perspective.* New York: Random House, 1969.

The book addresses the fact that there is a surprising lack of study directed to or about fathers and fatherhood in the modern industrial United States. The author points out that while moth-

ers or prospective mothers are deluged with information, instruction, advice, etc., and are the subjects of intensive study, fathers or prospective fathers are virtually ignored, and their roles, problems, behavior, etc., are absent from most scientific literature. To the end of correcting this oversight, the author reviews and integrates the available material on fathers. There is a very short section concerning stepfathers. A comprehensive bibliography is included.

Bilber, H., and Meredith, D. *Father Power*. New York: David McKay, 1974.

Commonsense, psychological perspective addressed to father or stepfather. Chapter entitled "The Stepfather" gives a simplified introduction to the complex process of becoming a stepfather. Notes potential problems with biological father, effect of child's age on developing relationship, feelings, and attitudes of stepfather, mother, and children toward the new relationship. Advises the need to make changes slowly in routine and activities.

Bitterman, C. The multimarriage family. *Social Casework*, 49: 218-221, 1968.

Based on clinical experience and addressed to caseworkers, it points out some special needs of lower socioeconomic clients. The one-parent, low-income family may have a great need for a new father as provider or a new mother as nurturer. Discusses patterns in remarriage and problem areas. Problem areas include: unresolved feelings, economics, former spouse, social or cultural differences, religious differences, and adolescents. Discusses the adaptation of children and the implications of multimarriage and stepfamilies for casework practice.

Bohannan, P., ed. *Divorce and After*. New York: Doubleday, 1970.

Collection of articles dealing with the process of divorce, its aftermath, divorce around the world, and divorce reform. Chapter entitled "Divorce Chains, Households of Remarriage, and Multiple Divorces" outlines eight terminologically recognized relationships based on a first marriage, then outlines and discusses the often large, diverse, and complex chains and kinship links formed by divorce and remarriage. Kinship terms and special-interest groups interested in divorce and remarriage are also discussed.

Carter, H., and Glick, P.C. *Marriage and Divorce: A Social and Economic Study*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.

This scholarly study systematically discusses demographic and socioeconomic factors affecting marriage and divorce patterns in the United States, specifically including the effects of age, sex, race, national origin, residence, education, occupation, and income. The data are drawn primarily from national and State census information compiled in 1959-60, and from State files of marriage and divorce records. It will be of special interest to social scientists.

de Vienne, D., ed. *Stepparents' Forum.* Canada: Montreal, 1975.

This newsletter, published bimonthly, offers support and guidance to stepparents to help them better understand their role and to function more effectively within it. Sections include: "Insights," where stepparents share what they've learned; "Professionally Speaking," a page devoted to relevant research on divorce, remarriage, and steprelationships; "Books," an up-to-date listing of recent works; "Stepchildren Talk Back," quotes and comments from young people who have experienced the stepchild role. Each issue also contains special features such as first-person stories and articles by professionals.

Duberman, L. *Marriage and Its Alternatives.* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974.

This book on marriage contains a chapter on remarriage. It discusses some demographic factors in remarriage, the choice of a second mate, common problems, and the adjustment to children. The references are somewhat dated and it does not include data from the research reported in *The Reconstituted Family* by the same author and published in 1975.

Duberman, L. *The Reconstituted Family: A Study of Remarried Couples and Their Children.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1975.

This study explains the dynamics of the reconstituted family, its possible effects on society, and the societal influences upon it. The author bases her findings on a systematic study of 88 families in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and on personal experience as a member of a reconstituted family. Her conclusions offer guidelines for effective action and a broad view of how reconstituted families cope with the difficult process of consolidating steprelations.

Felt, H., and Felt, M. *Stepparenting: New Families, Old Ties.* Boston: Polymorph Films, 1977. (16mm color film, 25 minutes).

A film which interviews Dixie de Vienne (a stepmother and editor of *Stepparents' Forum*), families, professionals, and a support group telling about some of the problems of stepparenting and the ways families deal with them.

Gardner, R.A. *The Boys and Girls Book About Divorce.* New York: Jason Aronson, 1970.

Common problems which confront school-age and adolescent children of divorced parents are presented to the child, along with suggestions of ways for him to solve, deal with, or adapt to his difficulties. Includes a chapter entitled, "How to Get Along Better With Your Stepfather and Stepmother."

Gettleman, S., and Markowitz, J. *The Courage to Divorce.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974.

Objective examination of divorce and remarriage. The authors, both practicing clinical social workers, explode some cherished myths and attack biased attitudes among professionals that dis-

tort research results, weaken the effectiveness of counseling, and do injustice to those whose lives are touched by divorce. Chapter entitled "Stepfamilies: Extending Love and Trust" highlights the positive aspects of the stepfamily and exposes some common misconceptions.

Gilbert, S.D. *What's a Father For?: A Father's Guide to the Pleasures and Problems of Parenthood With Advice From the Experts.* New York: Parents' Magazine Press, 1975.

The author of this book interviewed hundreds of fathers and spoke to experts including Benjamin Spock, Margaret Mead, Louise Bates Ames, Eda Le Shan, and other parent and child-care experts to come up with answers to questions all fathers ask. The book is primarily anecdotal and contains chapters on part-time fathers which include stepfathers and double-time fathers. Contains a bibliography and a section entitled "For Further Help and Information..." which lists organizations and books which might be of assistance to fathers.

Glick, P.C. *Some Recent Changes in American Families.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

A report for public officials which is a revised version of an address by Dr. Paul C. Glick that was given in connection with his receiving the E.W. Burgess Award for continuous and meritorious contributions to theory and research in the family field. It cites recent family statistics and analyzes their potential impact on public policy. Topics include: recent changes in marriage and fertility, divorce, statistics regarding children of parents who have (or have not) been divorced and who are living with a step-parent, and recent changes in living arrangements.

Goldstein, J.; Freud, A.; and Solnit, A. *Beyond the Best Interests of the Child.* New York: Free Press, 1973.

Focuses on the development of legal guidelines concerned with contested child placements that result from such cases as adoption, divorce, abuse, or neglect. Using psychoanalytic theory as a framework, the authors evaluate the psychological and biological needs of the child. They propose changes in the existing custody laws aimed at reducing conflict and enhancing continuity in the lives of children of divorce. A key issue examined is that of visiting rights. They propose that the noncustodial parent should have no legally enforceable right to visit the child, and the custodial parent should have the right to decide whether it is desirable for the child to have such visits.

Hensey, J. *Help for Single Parents.* Jackson, Miss.: Christian Action Commission, 1973.

Deals with the most pressing questions single parents face and is written from the perspective of family counseling and community pastoral relationships over a period of 25 years. Chapter entitled "Should the Single Parent Remarry?" discusses such questions as: What about the other parent? What are we going to tell the

child about the stepfather or stepmother? What will the child call the stepparent? What will be the role of the stepparent? Should the stepparent adopt your child?

Herzog, E., and Sudia, C.E. ***Boys in Fatherless Families.*** **Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.**

A review of studies which examine whether growing up in a fatherless home is likely to affect a child adversely in ways that would interfere with achieving his full potential. The generalizations about the adverse consequences of father absence and the research directly relevant to them are organized and discussed under three main headings: (1) overt behavior that is socially condemned (e.g., juvenile delinquency, extramarital pregnancy); (2) intellectual ability and achievement; and (3) psychological and social adjustment. Although many of the studies reviewed include stepparents, the primary focus is on the effects of continuing father absence.

Hunt, M.M. ***The World of the Formerly Married.*** **New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.**

Description of the formerly married, problems and experiences of separated and divorced people. The material presented comes from interviews, a national questionnaire survey, personal observation, and the published psychological and sociological literature on divorce. A chapter entitled "Return of the Expatriates" discusses the formerly married who remarry.

James, M. ***What Do You Do With Them Now That You've Got Them?*** **Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1974.**

Parenting in general. Chapter entitled "Stepparents Step Carefully" discusses the transactional analysis approach to being a good stepparent. Popular style using: question, explanation, anecdotal format. Talks about developing a new parent ego state, discipline, in-laws, ex-spouses, home emotional climate. Aimed at adults familiar with TA.

Kantor, D., and Lehr, W. ***Inside the Family: Toward a Theory of Family Process.*** **San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975.**

Develops a systems model for examining the major themes and components of family process and to show how they are employed in regulating members' behavior. The authors develop new concepts for family processes, describe settings where crucial behavior takes place, analyze behavior family members use in specific situations, identify clear-cut family types and member roles, and discuss marital, sibling, and parent-child relationships. The model is based on observations made by trained observers who actually lived with families of various ethnic, religious, educational, and class backgrounds.

Katz, S.N. ***When Parents Fail: The Law's Response to Family Breakdown.*** **Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.**

Discusses the legal responsibilities regarding divorce and remarriage, parenthood, adoption, and possible reforms. Feels that the

law frequently interferes with parent and child relationships. Appendix of case histories.

Le Masters, E.E. ***Parents in Modern America.*** **Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1974.**

A well-documented book about parents, it centers on the features of American society that parents have to cope with in raising children. Chapter nine discusses the role of the stepparent, analyzing the problems of parents who function under deviant or abnormal conditions. The two largest groups covered are mothers rearing children with no father present and stepparents of both sexes.

Lowe, P. ***The Cruel Stepmother.*** **Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.**

First person account of the adjustment of a blended family in the eastern United States in the 1950s and 1960s. The author, a woman, brought two young children into the new family and her husband brought an 8-year-old boy. This account is combined with a social commentary on issues for middle-class, educated, dual-career families.

Maddox, B. ***The Half-Parent: Living with Other People's Children.*** **New York: M. Evans, 1975.**

The author interviewed nearly 100 stepparents and interviewed or corresponded with professionals in the area of stepparenting both in the United States and England. Professional sources have been well-documented. The author, a journalist and stepmother, focuses on what she sees as a central characteristic of steprelationships: rivalry. This, she feels, should be acknowledged and understood. She also discusses adoption, legal obligations and rights of the stepparent, sexual attractions within the stepfamily, differences between adoption and stepparenthood, grandparents, the dead or absent partner, and discipline. She concludes that it's harder to follow a dead mother than a divorced one, and advocates a more honest appraisal of the stepfamilies' true characteristics.

McCormick, M. ***Stepfathers: What the Literature Reveals.*** **La Jolla, Calif.: Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, 1974.**

A literature review and annotated bibliography, this book was written in conjunction with the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute Study *Stepfathers and the Mental Health of Their Children* (Bohannan 1975). The literature survey ranges in topics from prevalence of stepfathers and their stepchildren, and the factors that influence the relationship, to discussing the future of the family. The bibliography has 164 annotations and, in the author's words, "only a small number of which deal specifically with stepfathers." Many of the items annotated deal with the family in general.

Mowatt, M.H. Group Psychotherapy for stepfathers and their wives. ***Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*****, 9: (4), 1972.**

Based on observations of three stepfathers and their wives who had independently come to a clinic setting for help with their children's behavior problems. The group included people who had been married once, twice, and three times. The author points out that there are differences between natural parents with problem children and parents in a stepfamily situation with problem children. Identification models were important to the therapy group. Stepfathers had difficulty with their roles and their wives' expectation of their roles.

Nye, F.I., and Berardo, F.M. ***The Family: Its Structure and Interaction.*** **New York: Macmillan, 1973.**

This popular textbook by two well-known scholars includes a section dealing with family reorganization and interaction. It contains a discussion of the family in crosscultural and subcultural perspectives, as well as a provocative discussion on the future of the family.

Olshaker, B. ***What Shall We Tell the Kids?*** **New York: Dell Publishing, 1971.**

This book tells parents in straight, simple language how to meet virtually every kind of question with a response that will help their child understand and cope with life. The chapter entitled "Remarriage" discusses the angry stepchild, the role of a stepparent, competition between stepparent and stepchild, half-siblings, and the children's need for stability. A chapter on separation and divorce is also included.

Otto, H.A., ed. ***The Family in Search of a Future: Alternate Models for Moderns.*** **New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970.**

In this volume a number of nationally known scientists respond to the proposal that alternate structures for the American family are a possibility and that further dialog is a necessity at this time. Divergent viewpoints and perspectives are presented, and a number contain a plea for a pluralistic approach to family structure.

Polatin, P., and Philtine, E.C. After divorce: Another marriage? ***Single Parent Magazine*****, 18 (6):5-8, 25, 1975.**

A psychiatrist's view of remarriage and the pitfalls of being a stepparent. Discusses visitation rights, the previous parent, past and present attachments, the confusion of children, and their problems adapting to the remarriage. Recommends that the parents must make peace with themselves about having divorced the other parent and a softening of the Church's attitude toward divorced people.

Rallings, E.M. The special role of the stepfather. *The Family Coordinator*, 25: 445-449, 1976.

This paper presents a review of the recent literature on stepfathers and proposes further research using a systems approach to role behavior.

Ramos, S. *Teaching Your Child to Cope with Crisis: How to Help Your Child Deal with Death, Divorce, Surgery, Being Adopted, Moving, Alcoholic Parents, Sick Parents, Leaving Home, and Other Major Worries*. New York: David McKay, 1975.

Based on the very latest research, this book is intended to assist parents in dealing effectively with minor childrearing problems before they become major ones; to help anticipate and avert crises before they erupt; and to utilize the common stresses of life, and even the tragedies, in strengthening the child's emotional growth. Chapter entitled, "Children, I'm Getting Married," discusses the child's typical reactions when the parent he lives with remarries and the typical early reactions between stepparents and their stepchildren.

Reingold, C. *Remarriage*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

This book, whose author is a happily remarried woman, goes beyond facts and figures directly to people. It is almost completely a collection of first-person stories; real people talking about spouses and ex-spouses, kids and stepkids, money, lawyers, friends, relatives, and themselves. A psychiatrist and a lawyer, who specialize in matrimonial cases, comment throughout. The book does not attempt to offer advice or answer questions and clearly shows that no two remarriages are alike. It does, however, recognize and encourage new lifestyles, new relationships, and the basic need to seek emotional fulfillment.

Richards, A., and Willis, I. *How to Get It Together When Your Parents Are Coming Apart*. New York: David McKay, 1976.

Deals with family troubles before, during, and after the divorce. While the book is addressed to adolescents to help them deal with the effects of their parents' marital troubles on their own lives, it can also be used by parents, social workers, divorce lawyers, teachers, and the clergy. Chapter entitled "The Family Circle" discusses the problems and feelings related to remarriage.

Roosevelt, R., and Lofas, J. *Living in Step*. New York: Stein and Day, 1976.

Directed primarily to the middle-class lay person already living in step or contemplating remarriage involving children, this book realistically defines the problems inherent in the steprelationship and offers practical solutions. The authors, themselves steppeople, explore the expectations and realities of "step" living (parent and child). Most of their conclusions are based on interviews with stepfamilies and personal experience rather than on scientific research or data. From this they reach a basic truth—the couple

must come first; the needs of children and ex-spouses must have subordinate priority if the "new" family unit is to succeed.

Satir, V.; Stachowiak, J.; and Tashman, H.A. *Helping Families to Change*. New York: Jason Aronson, 1975.

This book provides background information on the sociological foundations of family therapy, generally discusses family interaction patterns, and proposes multimodel family intervention strategies. The material, which includes articles, case studies, and interviews, is drawn from the authors' clinical and research experiences and is intended for professional counselors, therapists, and community workers who work with trouble families. The usefulness of the book is somewhat limited by insufficient information about the history of the family as an institution and about variation in family interactions.

Satir, V. *Peoplemaking*. Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books, 1972.

Based on the author's 35 years of experience as a family therapist, this book is aimed at both the professional and the layman. It deals primarily with parenting in general, but has a chapter entitled "Special Families: One-Parent and Blended." The section on the blended family consists of facts or advice dealing with: the complications of extended kinship networks, discipline, the changes in parenting both adults must undertake, the ex-spouse, visitation and support, ghosts, new children, and other assorted problems the new marriage faces.

Schulman, G. Myths that intrude on the adaptation of the stepfamily. *Social Casework*, 53: 131-139, 1972.

Based on clinical experience and addressed to family therapists. Focuses on the unique problems of the stepfamily; particularly the recurring myths and fantasies, of which stepfamilies are often victims. It is the author's conclusion that because these problems come up repeatedly in her family therapy sessions, they cannot be written off. She feels that therapists themselves are guilty of denying the child's special identity by referring to the stepparent as "your father" or "your mother" or acting as if the child has always lived in his new family. Advocates family therapy both prior to and following remarriage.

Schwartz, A.C. Reflections on divorce and remarriage. *Social Casework*, 49: 213-217, 1968.

Based on clinical experience and addressed to professionals. Sees need for those in family service to lead the way in changing attitudes toward remarriage. Cites need to study the remarriage family because they have to limp along with few societal rules to guide feelings and expectations. Feels that new habits, roles, and arrangements need to be established not only for the remarried nuclear family, but also for the diverse extended family.

Simon, A. *Stepchild in the Family: A View of Children in Marriage.* New York: Odyssey Press, 1964.

A professional journalist's review and personal experience of the problems of stepchildren. A sensitive and comprehensive book on the problems of bereavement and divorce. It is considered a classic and very much worth reading. Her tone throughout is hopeful, and she emphasizes the opportunities of new relations in combination families.

Smith, W.C. *The Stepchild.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953.

Historical study of the stepchild based on available literature and materials in case records of several agencies. Discusses the background of steprelationship in folklore, drama, fiction, and other centuries; the roles of the stepfather and stepmother; and the stepchild and his adjustment. Historical interest.

Steinzor, B. *When Parents Divorce: A New Approach to New Relationships.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.

The author is a practicing psychotherapist who presents his personal philosophy on divorce and marriage. He takes exception to the child-centered and friendly divorce approach, preferring direct dialog and confrontation. Believes that divorce based on an artificial friendship with the ex-partner is no solution. Book is meant for both parent and child. Discusses choosing a lawyer, separation agreements, child support, living independently, visitation relations, custodial relations, and remarriage. Contains some suggested readings.

Stuart, I.R., and Abt, L.E., eds. *Children of Separation and Divorce.* New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972.

A collection of articles written by psychologists, lawyers, clergymen, and social workers. The book takes a wide spectrum look at the social and emotional issues and problems of divorce. Special attention is given to the problems of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The emphasis is on the children and the parents' duties toward the children. The book consists of six sections. The chapters in part one discuss current conceptions of parental responsibility after divorce; part two relies on interviews with children of divorce; part three concerns religion and its teachings of marital responsibility; part four deals with the economically disadvantaged; part five provides a longitudinal view of the child; and part six discusses community aid. The article entitled, "Children of Divorced Parents in Second Marriages," by Schlesinger and Stasiuk, discusses their research in Canada with about 96 stepfamilies.

Thomson, H. *The Successful Stepparent.* New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

Written from a social work perspective and gives case examples. A practical guide for stepparents, in clear popular style. Offers

suggestions for handling situations such as: introduction of new parent to child, typical childhood problems to be expected, dealing with visitation of the biological parent, expressing feelings, discipline, jealousy, adoption, and custody.

Tybring, J.B. Remarriage: Parenting someone else's children. *Forum*, 2: 19-20, 27 (Wisconsin Psychiatric Institute), 1973.

Popular-type article examining psychological and interpersonal aspects of remarriage and stepparenthood. Gives summaries of some research findings in Bernard's 1956 study. Discusses the unrealistic expectations of people in a remarriage, ex-spouses, adolescents, and the problems of stepmothers. Recommends that stepparents and parents can help children by: (1) tolerating not being loved for awhile, (2) acknowledging the place of the biological ex-partner, (3) sharing activities, and (4) being patient.

White House Conference on Children, 1970. *Report to the President*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

This report on the status of children in the United States covers seven major subject areas: individuality; learning; health; parents and families; communities and environment; laws, rights, and responsibilities; and child service institutions. Each section includes references. The section on "Changing Families in a Changing Society" expands the narrow and static concept of the family which has affected policy and services in the past. "Children and Parents: Together in the World" points out that the United States is *not* child centered and that, in fact, "children and families all too often come last." It calls for a basic reassessment of priorities for the future.

Winch, R.F. *The Modern Family*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971.

Scholarly textbook presenting general theory of the family in both a sociological and sociopsychological approach. The author states that his point of view is structural-functional. Well-documented and comprehensive, the book covers a panorama of family and parental relationships and functions. Part Seven presents material on familial disorganization and reorganization.

Wiseman, J., ed. *People As Partners: Individual and Family Relationships in Today's World*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

A wealth of up-to-date essays reflecting the changing relationships between the sexes is offered in this preparation-for-marriage reader. There is particular emphasis on subjects of vital interest to today's youth, such as love, individualism, sex, and the changing family structure. At the same time, the readings are intended to increase the reader's practical knowledge of what is expected of marriage partners, areas of adjustment in marriage, the effect of children on parents, childrearing, coping with crises in marriage, and the strengths that a family can offer to the individual. Thus, the readings reinforce family values while acknowledging other trends in male-female relationships.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1979 O—286-655